dissent

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THINKING ABOUT THE ELECTION

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Irving Howe

Reagan and the Left

Say what you will about Ronald Reagan, he seems never to have supposed that we live in a time marked by "the end of ideology." It's also true that he may never have heard of the phrase. But with those intuitive political skills of his that even opponents have been forced to recognize, the president has sensed that ideology, symbol, myth, dream, vision—those clusters of emotional yearnings and half-formulated systems—still play a major part in our political life.

If there's anyone to be associated with "the end of ideology," it's Jimmy Carter. Millions of Americans apparently felt that at the center of Carter lay a stark emptiness, and surely that was one reason he lost the 1980 election. But Reagan grasped the truth that voters still respond strongly to stance, attitude, tone of voice, the sum of which may not be the same as ideology but does reflect a certain connection to it. Let the *National Review* and its cousin *Commentary* provide the husks of ideology; Reagan has done something more valuable for the right, he has "translated" ideology into warm sentiments and stirring slogans.

In its own way, then, the Reagan administration has been the most ideological of any American administration since the days of the New Deal. It has labored to bring the country back to the society and politics of the years before the New Deal; but knowing that it's not politically feasible to destroy the entire welfare state, it has shrewdly settled for slashing its flanks. It has also recharged chauvinist and crude anti-Communist sentiments, leading to the worst relations in decades with the Soviet Union, a frightening prospect of a nuclear arms race, and the real possibility that American troops will be sent to complete the overthrow of the Nicaraguan government.

In his four years as president, Reagan has done more to transform the social climate of this country than any president since Franklin Roosevelt. The changes wrought by the Reagan administration in domestic policy have been damaging enough, but more important still is the fact that Reagan has succeeded in creating among many Americans, especially the young, a notable increase of confidence in the workings of capitalism (sometimes quaintly called "the free market") and an equally notable shift toward a hard-spirited, snobbish, and Social Darwinist style of public discourse.

The terms of public discourse have shifted to the right these past few years—indeed, they have been largely set by the right, with both liberalism and the democratic left forced to engage in defensive responses. One mark of a president's success is whether he can determine the agenda for political debate, forcing the opposition to operate on his chosen terrain. Carter failed, not even (apparently) seeing any need to try; Reagan has succeeded, in part. Whether the Reaganite counterrevolution will leave a permanent mark on American society, we do not yet know.

A measure of Reagan's impact is to be seen in the falterings and hesitations of the opposition. Not one among the final trio of Democratic aspirants for the presidency has dared to stress—dared to make his main demand—a program for full employment. Not one has felt it would be politically advantageous to call himself a liberal in the open way that Reagan calls himself a conservative. Mondale, Hart, and Jackson have said many things, some useful, some rubbishy; but it would be hard to conclude from their campaigns that any one of them, or all three together, communicated a vivid sense of *another America* to be set against Reagan's hokey, nostalgia-laden, but obviously effective "free enterprise."

In saying all this I don't mean to suggest that Americans have suddenly been seized by a passion for ideology. But when people say they want a candidate who *stands for something*, I doubt that they have primarily in mind opinions about such specific matters as jobs, free trade, and Central

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America. What they mean, I suspect, is something a bit like what intellectuals mean when they talk about ideology—a world view, a vision of things, an encompassing political "philosophy." Reagan is very vulnerable on specific issues, but he alone among the leading candidates has melded his various positions into an overall vision. That it fits nicely onto an index card hardly diminishes its effectiveness.

THE 1984 ELECTION will be the most important and ideological since the election of 1932. Perhaps more so than that of 1932, since at that time the candidate Franklin Roosevelt bore little resemblance to the President Roosevelt of 1935–36, when the major New Deal measures were introduced. It was only after the 1932 election that its ideological significance became clear.

Now everything is clear enough before the election, and nothing the candidates say or don't say—a blur here, a shuffle there—is likely to affect the ideological division. Mondale, continuing to confuse caution with dullness, may repress those humane impulses that trusted witnesses say he possesses. His campaign is likely to be a thing of patches, good here and weak there, but without much coherence. No matter; Reagan has forced the issue, defined the ideological confrontation, and millions of Americans, however they may put it into language, feel this to be true.

The ideologies in confrontation—one put forward openly, the other muffled. A bold spokesman for laissez-faire (or as much of it as you can get by with at this point in history) will confront a hesitant defender of the welfare state. A strident advocate of renewed cold war will confront a cautious spokesman for controlling the nuclear race. For the immediate moment, the most urgent question will be whether this country deepens its outrageous intervention in Nicaragua. Directly after this problem will come another at least as serious: the frightful possibility that Ronald Reagan will determine the composition of the Supreme Court for the next few decades. We are experiencing a clash between two sociopolitical outlooks, two significantly different ways of running a capitalist society (whose legitimacy is not, for the great bulk of Americans, in question).

NO MATTER WHO WINS the election, life will continue. If Reagan wins, it's not the apocalypse and it's not fascism. But it would of course be a heavy blow to all the ideas, causes, and values in which most readers of *Dissent* believe. Still, political and social conflicts will continue, into the congressional elections of 1986 and beyond. The democratic left—scattered, weak, but with some renewed intellectual energy these past few years—will still have its place and its tasks.

If Mondale wins, what's likely to happen? At first, rather little. He'll have enough trouble getting out from under the inherited burdens of Central America and budget deficits. Unless we're suddenly hit with a severe economic crisis, it's hard to suppose Mondale will respond to the problems of the country with anything like the boldness into which Roosevelt was forced by the bank crisis that erupted soon after he took office. But then, if there hadn't been the bank crisis, Roosevelt would probably not have been so bold either.

Suppose, however, that there's "only" a moderate recession in late 1985. Mondale will then have to look around for some *policies*. At that point, the democratic or liberal left will have an opportunity, provided the leadership of the labor movement, the women's groups, and the resurgent black community presses for at least a few of the ideas that have been advanced in these pages by Bob Kuttner, Michael Harrington, and Robert Lekachman (as well as in our new book *Alternatives*).

Not only will the country's problems remain; so will the serious divisions within the political alliance that will have elected Mondale. It would be foolish to deny that behind Gary Hart are new political forces, energies, perhaps even ideas. And the same, of course, holds for Jesse Jackson. When Hart first won some primary victories, the managers of labor's political campaigns were badly shaken. I'm afraid that some of them might now feel that if Mondale wins, everything is back to "normal." In all friendliness, one wants to say to the labor leadership: it never will be, it's most unlikely that the unions can reestablish the domination they had within the liberal political coalition in recent decades, and it's certainly not desirable that there ever be a return to the push-and-shove outlook characterizing the era of George Meany.

The social-technological changes in this country, still unmeasured, will force a new relationship between the unions and their various allies—and if the unions recognize this in time and acknowledge it with a certain graciousness, everything will be decidedly better. Under Lane Kirkland's leadership, it's fair to add, there have already been significant signs of greater sensitivity to the interests and feelings of the other groups that are essential to the politics of liberal-labor coalition.

There's a lot of cultural tension—differences in style, language, and so on—between the labor people and the kind of younger technocrats who

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formed the base of Hart's campaign. I feel this tension myself, often growing irritable with the tendency of these people to behave as if they were put on earth as an elite ordained to rule, while they in turn grow bored, no doubt, with what they regard as the out-of-date loyalties to unionism held by people like me. But still, we must look for paths of at least partial reconciliation if we're to avoid a long period of right-wing domination.

FOR THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT itself, a Reagan victory will probably bring unhappy consequences. Some will drop away, others grow weary. Some of our liberal friends, already wobbling, will wobble themselves off into neoliberalism or neoconservatism.

I worry about the dangers of dispersion, the growth of "special interests" among ourselves. Some people on the left will conclude that immediate politics is hopeless and all they can do is project socialist utopias for the future. Others will conclude just the opposite: that socialism has become utterly irrelevant on the American scene, and what needs to be done is to dig in deeply in the trenches of current politics.

I have no objection to doing most of the things people on the left propose, from community organizing to utopian projections, from strengthening unions to fighting against intervention in Nicaragua. I object only to doing these things exclusively. Each of us is likely to do what he or she does best or cares about most, but *as a political community* we must try to see things whole, to encompass our fragmentary interests within a central animating vision. That means to help spur into new life an assertive liberalism, serving it as both ally and critic; and it also means to keep working away at our own intellectual tasks, patiently and undogmatically reestablishing the thought of the democratic left.

What I'm talking about isn't, of course, an easy sort of politics. But I think it's a good politics, the way of dissent and the way of *Dissent*.

□

P. S. NO MATTER what the motives for nominating Geraldine Ferraro, and brushing aside the cheap cynicism it has elicited in some quarters, I think this is an event of major importance in American political life. For the first time a woman is running for high office as a candidate of a major party. It is a triumph, and well-deserved too, for the whole feminist movement. And it confirms our view that sustained organizing can yield positive results. □

Fred Siegel

The False Promise of Generational Politics

The history of the last half-millennium can be written as the story of rising classes, each pronouncing itself a universal class that embodies the general good. More narrowly, just as Virginia gentlemen stressed the virtues of breeding and farmers extolled the virtues of the rural life, the young, highly educated professionals—a few years ago derided by the neoconservatives as the "New Class" but now renamed the "Yuppies"—insist that their meritocratically confirmed "intelligence" is the primary requisite for governing. The claim that their interests represent the general interest is particularly strong among New Class baby boomers because at each stage of their lives whatever they needed, from child rearing to school construction to draft avoidance, has forced itself on the national agenda. At each stage politicians and ad men have seen those needs as vehicles for their own careers.

In every election since 1972 pundits have announced that not only would the '60s generation shape the agenda as it had in '68, but that it was going to come to power through its representatives. One of McGovern's advisers, Fred Dutton, who later became a PR man for the Saudis, has written a widely praised book, *The Emerging Democratic*

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Majority, explaining how youth, newly enfranchised when the voting age dropped to 18, would sweep McGovern to victory. Youth failed McGovern; but he succeeded in attracting Silk Stocking Republicans, who helped remold the Democrats into a more professional and upper-middle-class party.

In 1973 and 1974 careening inflation and OPEC oil shortages dimmed the afterglow of the '60s. The era of youth was replaced by the era of limits. In the shadow of that economic downturn, the radicalism of many '60s college students was derailed by the harsh demographic realities of the 1970s.

In the 15 years between 1965 and 1980, 29 million new people entered the labor market, a population greater than the entire labor force of West Germany. The stiff competition for jobs between baby-boomer whites, upwardly mobile blacks, and increasingly job-oriented women produced a renewed concern for personal mobility, reflected in the career of the next "generational politician," California Governor Jerry Brown. Brown shrewdly combined antiwar themes with fiscal conservatism. "Remember," he told young Californians facing economic adversity for the first time in their lives, "the deficits we're paying off now are the ones Lyndon Johnson ran up to finance the war in Vietnam." Brown talked about creating a new cross-cutting coalition that would defy all the old categories. As later with Hart, blacks were not part of Brown's coalition. "Blacks," he told an aide, "are the wrong symbol in the '70s; they conjure up images of violence." And they demanded too much from government, they were too expensive.

Brown's failure to stop Carter in '76 did little to staunch the speculation in 1980 about how the baby-boom voters would finally make their numbers felt. But by 1980 they were no longer perceived as having a radical potential. The moderate Republican columnist David Broder rewrote Dutton in *Changing of the Guard*, which proclaimed the inevitable arrival of a generation of problem-solving moderates. Eventually, said Broder, quoting Republican pollster Robert Teeter, the "massive unmobilized 'baby-boom' generation of voters will be mobilized by someone or something. . . . One of these years, you're going to either have an idea, or an issue or a candidate come along that will create a majority coalition that would last."

George Bush picked up on Broder's theme and for a while the "preppie" candidate of the young upwardly mobile Ivy League WASPs, sounding much like the future Gary Hart on economic issues, managed to give Ronald Reagan a run for the Republican nomination. And buried in the general election statistics was the then surprising shift of middle-income, younger middle-aged voters to the Reagan camp. But the biggest surprise came in the brief postelection shift to Republican party identification, when the group showing the most marked change was that of the older middle-class baby boomers who had struggled with stiff job competition and rising home-mortgage interest rates under Carter.

WHATEVER THE PREVIOUS DISAPPOINTMENTS of generational politics, the "sleeping giant" promised to awaken in 1984, if only because the numbers had improved. In 1972 the '60s generation was only 23 percent of the voting-age population and 14 percent of the actual voters. But by the 1984 election they would be 43 percent of the eligible population and a predicted one-third of all voters. Moreover, it seemed in '60s language that they "had finally gotten their act together." According to pollster Daniel Yankelovich's 1982 book *New Rules*, the "baby-boom trend setters" had finally come into their own as self-confident, mature individuals ready to bear the burdens of social responsibility.

The economic success of the two-income professional families who were gentrifying the cities could hardly be doubted. Corporate America had gone by then through a "greening" of sorts. A 1982 study of 13 major corporations found that "a third of the top jobs were held by people under 40 and 74 percent by people under 50." Similarly, "new generation" politicians had come to the fore in Hart's home state of Colorado, on the Democratic National Committee, and in the House. In Colorado a coterie of New Politics Democrats—led by Governor Richard Lamm, who rode into office on environmental concerns, and by Patsy Schroeder, the antiwar congresswoman—are the Democratic party. Their counterparts are heavily in evidence on Charles Manatt's Democratic National Committee, which has been furiously trying to attract young entrepreneurial tyros into the party.

In the House, the Democratic Caucus, which recently issued its "Yellow Brick Road Report" for a high-tech Democratic future, is dominated by such young neoliberals as Wirth of Colorado and Gephart of Missouri. Even before Hart's presidential campaign, their strivings were parodied by C. E. Crimmins's *The Official Young Aspiring Professionals' Fast-Track Handbook*, which explained the social dangers of eating the wrong kind of cheese. While Ronald Reagan wasn't all that unattractive to many of these "networking" young tyros, they looked to Hart's campaign as an oppor-

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tunity to have their own success reflected on the national stage. A Hart presidency, reasoned pollster Pat Caddell, would be emblematic of their personal achievement.

"Hart alone," said a writer for the *New Republic*, Sidney Blumenthal, "is positioned to become the leader of the generation . . . that shaped and was shaped" by Vietnam and civil rights and that "because of its vast numbers, will eventually command politics well into the twenty-first century." Caddell and Blumenthal argue that Hart is both the courageous new leader fighting an uphill battle against entrenched interests and the irresistible wave of the future.

They are wrong on both counts. Arguing evidently from their own experience, they speak of the baby boomers as a unified group. In fact the baby boomers are sharply divided between those born before and after 1954. The younger group, and most of them did not take part in the "great refusal," is distinctly more conservative. The number of college students did grow rapidly in the 1960s, but even those of the '60s "political generation" were outnumbered by those young people who couldn't get a student deferment, who went to war, and came home to work in factories, farms, and restaurants. Some, as the young UAWers who were briefly militants for George Wallace, moved to the right; but many others, even those who voted for McGovern and Carter, were put off by the snobbery and pretensions of "hip" America.

Now, as many of the "best" have gone on to make their "separate peace" through a law partnership or a job title, these earlier divisions are reflected in the polls between Reagan and Hart. Reagan leads Hart among people between 30 and 49, and the president's strongest approval rating—57 percent—comes from 18- to 29-year-olds.

FINALLY, THERE'S THE LACK OF UNITY among the people who should be Hart's core supporters. In state after state Hart, the Senate loner, has failed to win the backing of other "new generation" politicians. In Tennessee there are four congressmen and one senator under 50, but not one supported Hart in the state's primary. The ideal of self-fulfillment, which links the '60s to the "me generation" of the '70s and the Yuppies of the '80s, leaves little room for the give-and-take essential to institution building. The "authentic" individual, preening himself or herself on an asserted independence, has a difficult time joining a coalition. Instead, many of the "new generation" politicians operate as policy entrepreneurs outside the bounds of party loyalties. When Richard Celeste, a young politician who has spoken of generational themes, was asked why he had not supported Hart, he responded, "After all, we're very competitive."

One explanation for Hart's limitations will surely be that he was sociologically ahead of his time. The cry will be, "Wait Until '88." But the baby boomers are leveling off as a percentage of the voting-age population; they will soon begin to decline. Still, no doubt, the illusion of generational salvation will be with us for many an election to come. □

Samuel Hux

"The Prez Doth Cut a Goodly Figure . . ."

When we talk politics at home, in a bar, or at a party—that is, wherever there are no bulbs flashing or cameras rolling—there's at least a good chance we'll speculate, "Will the Democrats/Republicans raise/lower taxes and the Congress vote in/out a jobs program?" But it's disturbing that more and more the media in their coverage, and the casual commentary of citizens when mikes are thrust before them, tend to sound like the appreciative judgment of a courtier: "The prez doth cut a goodly figure today. . . ."

It's disturbing because there is more involved here than "merely" a vulgarization of the political process by electronic "journalism." More impor-

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tant: this phenomenon joins (1) an essential feature of the American political system and (2) a pervasive mood of politics in this century in (3) a chilling configuration that should not allow one to dismiss as innocent inanity the media's love of the *politics of performance*.

I don't think there's much need to argue that network television elevates style above substance. "The president seemed particularly energetic tonight. His presentation was brisk and his manner self-assured, an obvious challenge that has to put his detractors on the defensive." Or: "The president's tone was moderate and his language restrained, and one can only wait to see what will be the posture of the new old boys of the Kremlin. . . ."

Ted Koppel has argued (in "The Myth of the Medium," *New Republic*, February 6, 1984) that we exaggerate the political power of television: "It is not the medium but the candidate and the message that still count." Well, they "still count" under the aspect of eternity. But under the aspect of the medium, the gesture of the candidate clearly counts more than the gist of his message.

One need argue only a little more that our political system makes the dramaturgical manipulation of the electronic media easier. The citizens of Ruritania may know that if the Radical Populists win the parliamentary elections Adalbert Branko will in all likelihood be named prime minister. Nonetheless, the citizen of Lower Ruritania does not vote for Branko (who's running in Central Ruritania) but for his own regional candidate, Otto Lenska. This does not mean that Lenska will not kiss babies or dye his hair for photogenic purposes. But it does mean there's a better chance the citizen will vote for Lenska because he likes the Radical Populist *program*. He does not have the luxury of the American who may vote for the Democratic candidates for Senate and Congress because he's a union member afraid of union-busting, and then vote for the Republican presidential candidate because he's responsive to a certain style. The Ruritanian, unless he's totally besotted, is more or less compelled to vote the issues.

It's one of the ironies of American electoral politics that our privilege of voting directly for the head of government—which makes our system apparently most democratic—is also what makes it easy to avoid taking the democratic process with complete *political* seriousness. Ruritanian television might wish to focus its report of a debate on the observation that "Lenska upstaged his rather too stiff opponent, slipping with marvelous aplomb in and out of the *Niederruritanische* dialect, an argot wonderfully suitable to subtly comic abuse." But the point is that Ruritanian television would not get a direct assist from the nature of the electoral system itself. There would be a certain built-in resistance to interesting triviality.

I would also argue that apart from the unfortunate cooperation of electronic media and the electoral process there is a dangerous mood in this century, usually latent but easily tapped, which predates television and can corrupt any political system. Call it the temptation of the politics of boredom-and-excitement.

IMAGINE A STAGE setting with very handsome props, eclectic, tasteful, but a little threadbare, suggesting generations of use: a room where weighty decisions have been made. A man enters, strolls, and stands about. His countenance and posture undergo slow changes conveying pleasure, then hesitation, finally discomfort. We get the point: all this is newly his, but he's not yet quite its. He notices and walks to a wardrobe in the corner, pulls off his rather garish plaid jacket, pulls out a more sedate herringbone and dons it, nods approval.

Now he looks more in place. He sits at a desk, writes a couple of notes that he places in the outgoing box; rises, stretches, pours himself a dark liquid, sherry or cognac apparently; sniffs, drinks, nods. No longer overwhelmed, he dominates. He returns to the desk, writes, thinks, doodles, walks about, returns, writes, thinks, doodles, walks about—repeating this cycle with increasing agitation and impatience. Finally he moves to a chair center stage, sits, looks about, slumps, and stares. He is utterly bored. "So *this* is what it entails."

The setting represents the halls of power, the stage time a dramatic foreshortening of the last 80 years or so, give or take a decade, and the character the liberal bourgeois. For reasons I doubt I will ever fully grasp, the bourgeoisie seems to enjoy nothing so much as detesting its own accomplishments. That seems its way of approximating the stylish *ennui* of the titled or untitled aristocracy it superseded decades ago.

Now, the politics of boredom-and-excitement belongs neither to right nor left exclusively but to those who possess some vague political urge, feel some necessity to manifest themselves publicly, yet tire of or have no taste for the often boring business of public affairs: to see to jobs, incomes, food, housing, health, and the prospect of a good life for the citizen without whose quite ordinary existence there would be no government in the first place.

The politics of boredom-and-excitement is a lust for *interestingness* in the public sphere (which usually betrays an incapacity to create or sustain

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one's own private excitements); a distrust of the reasonable as insufficiently heroic, and a disgust with the ordinary (which when felt by an ordinary person convinces him that he's extraordinary). The result is a weakness for symbolic politics, flashy postures.

Of course, times have never been free of public flourish and politics dramatized: the Elizabethan-Jacobean courtly pomp, the Renaissance notion of the world as stage, its major scenes regal. But there is a difference between the theatricalization *of* politics, and theatricalization *as* politics. The first is a matter of public affairs accorded an appropriate ritual. But in the second, the ritual itself becomes important and its meaning an incidental what-have-you. I think our first impulse is to see theatricalization *as* politics as the older mode, and theatricalization *of* politics as ours. But I think we are wrong, or half so. It is in *this* century that politics has too often been long on show and short on substance.

It may seem the other way around because the past's theatricality seems showier to us than our own (its foreignness helps us to see it) and the domain of its actual politics seems limited in comparison to our own, having less to do with jobs, incomes, and so mundanely forth. The domain of politics in the Renaissance was indeed more limited. There were poor laws and trade regulations, of course, but not the extensive social and economic legislation of our times. So the politics then was naturally theatrical or ceremonial: military adventure, dynastic matrimony as foreign policy, confrontation between royal prerogative and parliamentary ambition, and so on. The political circumstance and the pomp were usually in proportion to one another.

But, over the centuries, more differences have developed. One is that the area of circumstances recognized as essentially political has grown immensely, at the same time that pomp has tended to recede into the landscape of the everyday or to be reserved as a kind of classy entertainment for high patriotic occasions—July parades, inaugurations, and such. Another is that with the democratization of politics the populace that once was a tolerated audience has become a needed participant, so that when we speak of politics we refer not only to the regime but also to the population and its movements, opinions, and even moods.

So now: in our century politics still means war, foreign policy, executive privilege confronting legislative responsibility, and so forth, but even more social and economic regulation. In our century the sheer ceremony and theatricality of politics is, generally, muted. And in the main I think that a good thing. And yet, no matter how we may compliment ourselves on our good sense, it is precisely in *this* century that humankind has suffered from theatricality *as* politics, with truly disastrous effects.

The theatricality we can recall historically is a rather shabby style: Mussolini mugging before assembled mobs imagining themselves Roman legionnaires; to the north, crippled and vulgar reenactments of dark Teutonic rituals. But the obvious fact that those posturings were brutal nonsense tends to put them at a remove from us, to make them seem exceptions, freaks, foreign to the political tenor of our time. My point is that they *are not*. They were violent manifestations of a mood and a cast of mind that are often enough our own.

That is: a pathological boredom, which in ordinary times is obvious merely as a certain elevation of cheapness in the social body but that can, when times are ripe, take on an organized political expression, without which the fascisms we have known in the West would never have been more than the neurotic dreams of déclassé ideologues. In the industrial and postindustrial West, this has not been a century for jacquerie: without significant thousands of bourgeois citizens bored stiff with "ordinary politics" such a political movement may be mass, but it will also be inert.

More often than not, boredom is actuated into political expression by some cause that seems sufficiently "radical." Even if it is in fact conservative or reactionary, it must seem radically so. And it was the radicalism (of a sort) of fascism that appealed to the bored. Its alternative names—"national syndicalism," "national socialism," "revolutionary corporativism"—lent it a certain undeserved panache. The nationalism—whether

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You Will Have Noticed . . .

that all the Comments & Opinions in this issue, though prescient, were written before the Republican and—except for Harold Meyerson's comment—the Democratic party conventions—before the distinguished choice of Geraldine Ferraro; before the speeches and the votes.

These party conventions simply conflict with our publication's schedule. We'll return to the election in our Winter issue. — Eds.

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Hitler's *Blut und Boden* and Jew-hatred or Mussolini's "proletarian nation," or what-have-you, provided a more lustful excitement and fervor than could gray questions of economics and social justice, which do not always move real and potential followers of aspiring mass movements.

Fascism appealed to the petty men and women whose patience with the hard, taxing, often boring regimen of "ordinary politics" was so small that they could be moved only by flashy "aesthetic" simplisms that struck them as large and poetic . . . but were only trivial and dangerous. Politics should be heroic: somehow at once an austere classicism and a fierce romanticism (which is why the fascist always looked classier in Spanish garb: the Spaniards have a talent for that paradox). Not for the hero the day-to-day balancing of political ledgers, the compromises of petty administration. . . .

I APOLOGIZE for getting carried away. I'm not really looking over my shoulder and listening for jackboots. And perhaps it's reassuring that any staginess in our politics today is relatively drab, workaday, and sit-comic, hardly a high aesthetic affair—wattles, pompadours, white shirts not black, and avuncular smiles. However, our theater is naturalistic and prosy too, that's our dramatic style now; so I'm not reassured.

Still, I'm not presenting some disguised argument that Reagan is really a fascist with sycophantic Goebbelses chattering on camera. Yet my excursion into fascist "theater" is no idle trip. Marx said that "all great, world-historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice . . . the first time as tragedy, the second as farce" (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*). I would add that some world-historical facts and moods occur first as farce, sustain themselves as such, and yet erupt now and then as tragedy. Fascism was one tragic eruption. But the farce of the politics of boredom-and-excitement predates and outlasts that eruption. And farce is seldom very funny.

Both the general politics of boredom-and-excitement and the specific eruption of fascism share a tendency toward theatricalization *as* politics. And they share a tendency to ignore, downgrade, or keep a tasteful distance from ideology. Historians still debate whether fascism had any ideology. I daresay it did. But its publicists generally preferred to insist that it was not an ideology, nothing so Marxist or bourgeois as that, but was instead a process, a movement, a transcendence, a heroic *Weltanschauung* creating and transforming itself in the glorious, violent, on-going transcendence of the movement of process . . . such gibberish so intoxicating to the bored. But there is a persistent danger here—for politically respectable people in this century also have a tendency to keep a tasteful distance from ideology.

Ideology has a bad press. We often subscribe to a rough approximation of Karl Mannheim's ideas in *Ideology and Utopia:* ideology is a set of views justifying the power of those *in* power. Or we mean an inflexible system of sociopolitical thought not subject to revision by sociopolitical facts. But ideology should mean a coherent, and flexible, set of assumptions about human nature, social possibility, and cultural values, which dictate interlocking public policies and programs. Ideology is not the enemy of ordinary politics where "things get done": in politics without benefit of *clercs*, intellectuals, gaps get stopped for a week or two. I don't think a political person without an ideology is quite to be trusted.

Now theatricalization *as* politics is not the same thing as the rejection or lack of ideology. But they go together. One creates the facilitating context for the other: if you're not burdened by hard ideological concerns it's much easier to cultivate theatrical gestures; if the theatrical is what's appreciated, why bother having any ideological baggage? We end up with a substitute for a real politics, not (as in the theatricalization *of* politics) an appreciation of it.

So, given an electoral process that both allows and encourages the politics of personality and gesture over issues, and given the persistent temptation of the politics of boredom-and-excitement, when network television heightens the dramatic gesture, posture, stance, and style, it is not merely focusing on a dimension of politics. It is, rather, playing with fire by rewarding and encouraging our most inane and potentially most dangerous political habits. To note that, one doesn't have to fear the return of tragedy; one may simply dread being subjected to a long-running farce.

I'd like to be hopeful. I don't count on television to reform itself. But one might hope that in its indulgence of "performance critique" it might eventually reveal itself sufficiently, so that the citizenry will have to notice its political distractiveness. I recently stopped at an unfashionable watering hole an hour north of New York City. TV on;

COMING — IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

Literary Radicalism in America

by David Bromwich

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commentator's predictable remarks about presidential style, personal popularity with Washington press corps, and so on. "Who gives a goddamn?" growled a patron, "I've worked six months in the last twelve!"—and he sloshed the contents of his beer mug across the screen. The bartender—"Dammit George, you'll work the damned mop!"—seemed more sympathetic than really cross. But I don't know how many times this tippler can be replicated. □

Thomas E. Weisskopf

The Elections & The Economy

As every lay analyst of U.S. national elections knows, the first law of electoral economics is that good economic news favors the party in power and bad economic news hurts its chances. This is not to say that economic conditions are necessarily determining; only that they are influential and not easily offset by other factors in an election.

This law, however, is not quite so easy to apply. The problem is a familiar one to economists: how do we determine how good or how bad economic conditions really are, when there are so many different indicators to choose from? Low unemployment and low inflation are both clearly desirable, but they rarely go together. Summing the rates of unemployment and inflation to form a "misery index" may make for good campaign rhetoric, but such an index is not necessarily an accurate indicator of general economic well-being. Many other figures are regularly trotted out to describe the state of the economy: growth rates, interest rates, business-failure rates, budget deficits, balance-of-payments deficits, stock-market prices—to name only a few.

Faced with this plethora of often conflicting statistics, empirically minded election analysts have looked for systematic relationships between economic variables and election outcomes in the United States. It turns out that there is one economic indicator, at least, that provides a consistently accurate forecast of presidential election outcomes since 1948. According to the Wharton Econometric Forecasting Association, the best indicator is the growth of real disposable personal income (that is, the inflation-corrected value of total after-tax income available to consumers). Whenever the growth rate of this "pocketbook index" has exceeded its postwar average (3.8 percent) in the year preceding the election, the incumbent party has remained in power. Whenever the index has grown more slowly, the incumbent party has been turned out of office. The one time the index grew at exactly its average rate in the year prior to the election was 1968, when Richard Nixon barely edged Hubert Humphrey to take office from the Democrats.

The Outlook for 1984

What about 1984? As I write (in mid-June), it is no contest. The traditional indicators are (for a change) all pointing in the same direction, adding up to a great deal of good economic news. The unemployment rate is down more than 3 percentage points since it peaked in late 1982 (that it is virtually the same as when Ronald Reagan took office hardly seems to matter). The rate of inflation has been cut in half. Real GNP growth has been rapid in the last year and a half, thanks to the cyclical recovery of the economy. And—yes—the "pocketbook index" has been booming: it went up by roughly 7 percent from spring 1983 to spring 1984, buoyed not only by the cyclical recovery but also by the Reagan tax cut.

All this adds up to a wonderfully managed reelection campaign, achieved without the expenditure of a penny from the Republicans' campaign chest. The costs were, of course, paid earlier and—for the most part—not by Republicans. They were

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paid by millions of Americans in the currency of unemployment, business failure, and general loss of economic well-being during the longest and worst U.S. recession since World War II.

But is there really nothing in the economic environment to mar this reelection scenario? Democrats cannot expect to benefit much from anger at the huge cost that was imposed on the electorate from 1979 through 1982 (without which the current cyclical recovery would hardly have been so timely, nor would it have appeared to be so strong). Political memories are too short.

There is some possibility that the main economic indicators will not be quite so buoyant by November. Overall economic growth is expected to slow down; unemployment will not easily fall much further; many signs point to the growth of new inflationary pressures; and the growth of the "pocketbook index" may well slip a percentage point or two. But none of this implies the kind of major reversal of economic fortune, before the election, that would shake public confidence in the Republicans' economic competence.

Unfortunately—both for the prospects of defeating President Reagan and of promoting a sustained economic recovery—the most problematic aspects of the current economic situation affect the longer-term health of the U.S. economy rather than its immediate future. As Herbert Gintis has expressed it, the U.S. economy is rather like an ailing head of state paraded gingerly before an anxious public; it has been pumped full of pain killers in order to maintain its form for the duration of the electoral campaign.

Longer-Term Prospects

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS of underlying ill health? Members of the economic press (and the Democratic candidates, when they venture to talk about the economy at all) have pointed to several troubling issues. Interest rates are beginning to rise again; not only is this worrying the real estate and automobile businesses, it is raising fears of widespread default among Third World debtor nations. The federal budget deficit continues to elicit new synonyms for "astronomical." Benign as this may be for an economy still characterized by high unemployment and excess capacity, it is bound to turn increasingly malign as (and if) the cyclical recovery continues. And events in the Middle East, as the Reagan administration has so ably demonstrated, remain quite beyond U.S. control; an escalation of the Persian Gulf war could cause great trouble for the world capitalist economy, once the available short-run cushion of excess oil supplies and stockpiled reserves is exhausted.

All these problems suggest that inflationary pressures are likely to increase sharply within the next year or so. And this in turn is widely expected to lead (either directly, or with an assist from an administration determined—like Gerald Ford a decade ago—to "Whip Inflation Now") to yet another recession. In short, "stop-go" policy and "stop-go" performance are likely to remain characteristic of the U.S. economy in the 1980s as they were in the 1970s. The main difference is that in the '80s we started out with a much heavier dose of "stop," giving "go" a new luster.

Although the dark economic clouds on the horizon are unlikely to cast much of a shadow on Ronald Reagan's smiling visage before the election, they will surely prove to be a source of great discomfort for whoever takes office in January. Economic policy-makers will face some difficult choices next year. The gravity of the long-term economic situation—and the underlying reasons for it—are not well appreciated by most economic observers.

During the past year the media (and the Republicans) have celebrated the strength of the U.S. economic recovery, pointing to evidence not only of rapid GNP growth but also of rising capital spending and higher productivity growth. Indeed, many analysts seem to feel that the main problem with the recent economic recovery is precisely its apparent vigor. The booming U.S. economy is feared to be heading for an inevitable fall, as increased demand for funds and goods (stimulated to excess by the huge structural deficits in the federal budget) drives up interest rates and prices and eventually chokes off profits and growth.

In reality, however, it is the weakness rather than the strength of the economic recovery that is its most disquieting feature. The rapid growth of GNP, of capital spending and productivity is very deceptive. After years of stagnation, it is to be expected that these variables pick up sharply. Still more significant is that capital spending and productivity have performed quite poorly by historical standards.

Rising capital expenditures on new plant and equipment normally fuel the second phase of a cyclical expansion (after consumer and/or military purchases launch the initial upturn). And this capital spending normally provides a firm basis for long-term productivity growth (beyond the short-term gains associated with the initial revival of production after a recession). After falling for the first two years since the Reagan tax cut of 1981,

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capital spending did rise significantly in the last year. Its contribution to the recovery, however, has been diminished by the fact that a considerably larger proportion of the spending than in the past is directed to imported rather than domestically produced goods.

Moreover, this new capital stock is contributing much less than in the past to long-term productivity growth. Now a much larger fraction of it is needed simply to replace worn-out or discarded old capital stock, and now an unusually high proportion of the capital goods acquired are items of equipment rather than physical plant. As a result, the net U.S. capital stock is only increasing very slowly. And a substantial part of the increase consists of short-lived equipment (such as new computers) rather than long-lasting plant (such as new factories).

All this means that capital accumulation will not do much to increase productivity growth in the foreseeable future. This is a reason for great concern. The long-term decline in U.S. productivity growth since the mid-1960s has been a major source of the economic stagflation of the last decade and a half. To date, there is no evidence that this productivity slowdown has been reversed. Since the trough of the last recession in late 1982, nonfarm business productivity has been growing at only half the rate typical for this phase of a cyclical recovery. And the slow pace and unfavorable pattern of capital accumulation that characterize the Reagan recovery presage continuing productivity problems in the coming years.

Reaganomics has brought us a palliative, in the form of a short-run GNP boom—but not a cure, in the form of a long-run productivity revival. Without an entirely new strategy designed to address the underlying productivity problems of the U.S. economy, there will be no way out of alternating bouts of stagnation and inflation through the 1980s and beyond.

Underlying Problems and Some Solutions

SOME PROGRESSIVE CRITICS of the Reagan administration's economic strategy have argued that its fundamental Achilles' heel is its inequitable impact on the distribution of income in the United States. Not only is it grossly unfair to pamper the well-to-do and to pauperize everyone else; but a strategy that drives people out of the "middle class" and polarizes society into a two-class structure of haves and have-nots is believed to undermine the prospects for sufficient aggregate demand to maintain economic prosperity. Surely, it is harder to sustain the demand for automobiles when the average auto worker now needs 38 weeks' wages to buy an average car rather than the 28 weeks' wages needed ten years ago.

This essentially Keynesian fear of the long-run economic consequences of Reaganomics, while humanely motivated, is probably misplaced. In the last few years, we have borne reluctant witness to the insatiable appetite of the Pentagon and the ingenuity with which the market can cater to the whims and caprices of the rich. When and if the U.S. economy is threatened by an insufficiency of aggregate demand, it can be rescued by new allocations for the Pentagon or by tax breaks for the affluent. Such measures may well give rise to a shift in the productive structure of the economy away from old-fashioned consumer durables toward military hardware and new consumer luxuries. And this will lead to a variety of localized or short-run hardships, as we have seen in recent years. But it can succeed in avoiding a long-run economy-wide crisis of inadequate demand.

The gravest problems of the U.S. economy are on the *supply* rather than the *demand* side of the system; they are long-run rather than short-run. Unlike demand-side problems, which have been alleviated by the Reagan administration's military-cum-luxury Keynesianism, the supply-side problems are much more deep-rooted. They are symptomized by the long-run slowdown in U.S. productivity growth, which the administration's own supply-side and monetarist ministrations have so conspicuously failed to alter.

One way to address these supply-side problems would be to develop an economic strategy to encourage a much more rapid pace and productive pattern of investment. It has been amply demonstrated in recent years that this cannot be achieved by relying on the natural profit-making instincts of private corporations competing (after a fashion) in an increasingly tax-free and deregulated market environment. At a minimum, the requirement is a much stronger public effort to mobilize investable funds and allocate them to productive use than we have seen since the Second World War.

Productivity growth can also be stimulated by thorough-going reorganization of our society's pattern of labor relations and workplace organization. Authoritarian structures of management control and bloated supervisory bureaucracies, so characteristic of U.S. corporations, have actually expanded in scope in recent years (despite some well-publicized, different examples). There is enormous room for improvement here, but meaningful change will challenge many vested interests and thus cannot be accomplished without strong politi-

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cal organization and effective leadership. In the context of such fundamental supply-side changes, it would be possible to pursue a consistently expansionary demand-side policy to promote full employment with little fear of inflation. In the absence of such changes, inflationary pressures will plague each cyclical recovery and will continue to be fought with periodic economic downturns.

It is a sad commentary on the state of our political system that talk of basic economic change now appears wildly utopian. For all their differences on other matters of concern, the Democrats do not seem tc be offering an economic strategy that is fundamentally distinct from that of the Republicans in its approach to the underlying problems of the U.S. economy.

Economic events will no doubt have a significant impact on the elections this year. Regrettably, it seems unlikely that the outcome of the elections will have much impact on our economy. □

Todd Gitlin

Campaign Images: Mirrors Within Mirrors

It is an appalling visitation. You turn on the television and watch the president of the United States. He delivers his right-thinking homilies, fudges his ignorance, composes his chuckles, strains to summon a fact or two from failing memory banks stuffed a few hours earlier in a quick cram course. Announcers, reporters, pundits take all this seriously. With few exceptions, they sonorously take at face value the claims of this man whose sense of the real is so fundamentally damaged. Collaborating with the machinery of image-making, as he has done all his adult life, the president "sounds good" and "looks good," so we say. His sheltered, cramped view of the world is no longer the point.

The point, it seems, is that Reagan embodies that dreamland America perpetually on its way onward and upward, radiating assurance and the upbeat, mirroring back to America its glorious founding premise—that the power of the will is going to conquer the unruly tangle of the wilderness. "Americans live in the future," he said once, expressing an important half-truth about the cocky archetypical American, ever ready to blunder into the swamps of war because (unless the politicians get in the generals' way) We Can't Lose.

It has been pointed out (by Steven R. Weisman in the *New York Times Magazine* and the anonymous chroniclers of the *New Yorker*'s "Talk of the Town") that Reagan's genius, if that is the right word, has been his capacity to sidestep responsibility. He is Mr. Teflon, the man to whom blame does not stick. He does not control, his manner would have us believe; he presides. The *New Yorker* ingeniously traced Reagan's practical sidestep to his origins as a radio announcer. Whether calling plays on the field or, later on, introducing the *General Electric Theater* on television, Reagan was host. The announcer or host isn't in charge; he's just pointing out what's going on out there, somewhere else. Ronald Reagan Presents the United States of America; Ronald Reagan takes note that the Marines were killed in Lebanon. But there is more to it than that. Reagan does seem to be as perfect a television president as Jimmy Carter was a hapless one. Even gestures like the cock of his head are just the right size for the close-up; on the lecture platform, they'd be lost.

It seems perfectly obvious that a candidate has to "look good," whatever that means, on television, to win either the nomination or the presidency. Image *is* real when voters make real choices on the basis of little knowledge *besides* image. The candidates cater: this is their defining work in a mass society that is formally democratic, with parties that aren't organized ideologically. The media of the time create the screen on which the image has to be projected; nothing new about that. To be a silver-tongued orator was sufficient and appropriate in 1896, when William Jennings Bryan swept

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the Democratic convention. To project a comforting radio presence was excellent in 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944, when TV cameras might have caught FDR constantly on crutches or in a wheelchair and hurt him severely. All seems image, which is the mass democratic equivalent of vanity.

And so Reagan as host is perfectly perched to exploit television, the medium that magnifies the telling gesture, the composed demeanor, the small witticism. But this match between technology and talent is only the beginning of his mastery of the medium. Since his days in the California State House Reagan has been adept at glad-handing the press and giving them what they want: quotable lines, good profiles, "photo opportunities" (the secular equivalents of papal audiences *en masse*), and the feeling of being taken seriously, let in on glamor, ease, uplift, and camaraderie. If television is more easily conned than the print media, the difference is one of degree, not kind. The press likes to be taken for a ride because prefabricated excitement is its bread and butter.

TECHNOLOGY ASIDE, there are several reasons why Reagan got off relatively easy in the 1980 campaign. First, a small but salient matter of personality: many reporters hated Carter, who froze them out, preached at them, and didn't make them feel like honored guests in the entourage. Second, the more or less liberal Democrats among them were bending over backward to be kind—"fair"—to Reagan. After he announced that trees cause pollution, and this along with other such remarks went around the world, Reagan's staff decided to keep him away from reporters. On at least one occasion, his press secretary, Lyn Nofziger, resorted to holding a clipboard in front of a TV camera to keep it from intruding where it wasn't wanted. Shut out, most TV reporters let the insurgent candidate off the hook. Newspaper reporters did no better. Never mind that for several previous years Reagan had blared forth his homespun rightism in hundreds of columns and broadcasts. Daily journalism, a memory hole, paid no attention. Old news is a position the candidate wants us to forget about, and the reporters were glad to comply.

The hapless Carter tried to make an issue of Reagan's militarist proclivities, only to get labeled as "strident." Perhaps he was, although I suppose another observer might have called him "passionate." But Carter's vehemence played badly, like his too huge, too strained grin. (Carter didn't know what soap opera actors learn: the gesture that projects well to the far balcony on Broadway looks garish on the small screen.) Reporters defined his "warmonger" charges as extreme, and Mr. Nice Guy cried foul and let the nasty words slide right off. (Little old me send Marines to Lebanon and Grenada? Me blow up oil tanks and fishing boats in Nicaragua?)

There is yet another reason for the supine acceptance of Ronald Reagan by the press. Once his geniality was established, reporters and their editors were fearful of seeming (image, again!) too harsh toward him. The members of the fourth estate are keenly aware that Reagan is more popular, as the polls show, than they are. In the delicate legitimacy game that the top American institutions are playing, even the image movers, shakers, and breakers are image-conscious. This, partly, is run-of-the-mill image management and partly, perhaps, a fear that if the networks incur too much presidential wrath they'll suffer in the giveaway sweepstakes now taking place in Washington under the heading "deregulation."

For all these reasons, once in office Reagan has been able to capitalize on the same fine image that gave him the appearance of a landslide with 51 percent of the 1980 popular vote. True—and left-wing paranoia misses this point—there has been sufficient media criticism to draw administration annoyance. The White House is not delighted when an occasional network piece undercuts official claims with a strong fact. (I happened to catch one such NBC piece last spring: Reagan gave a speech reciting what he had presumably done for women. Following footage of Reagan setting forth each of his claims, NBC reporter Carl Stern juxtaposed a hard fact that refuted it. Reagan claimed wonders for the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, for example, and Stern showed that enforcement funds had been slashed.)

But it is also true that, once having observed that Reagan slides away from hard questioning, reporters usually give up easily. The pointless massacre of the Marines in Lebanon faded fast; Debategate was a dead issue until a judge resurrected it; flaws in the official story about Korean Air Lines 007 surfaced only piecemeal and slowly; and so on. Why? Again, the normal memory hole, the press of later-breaking news, the media's normal reliance on official sources. But more: the media know that, for example, many more people supported Reagan's military censorship in Grenada than their own First Amendment rights. They fear shaking public confidence in their own credentials.

The upshot is that since Ronald Reagan is president of the United States, the media assume he is entitled to a kind of respect that borders on tribute. Under these conditions, tribute is not necessarily

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agreement; it may take the curious form of singling out the president's manner for more comment than his matter. TV patter in politics sounds like, and draws its model from, sports talk. "Color commentary," as they call it during the ball game, is the better part of tribute. In other words, the media's obsequiousness follows from their sensitivity to what they think is their role.

Respect for the White House view of the situation is not simply utilitarian; it is an article of belief. If the media question policies at all, they are likely to do so on the ground of efficacy, not of objective. They are far more likely to ask, "Does it work?" than "Who benefits?" and "Is this a fit goal?" And, above all, they feel bound to revere the office of The Presidency. The sitting president—the only president we have, as Lyndon B. Johnson used to say—gets the benefit of the doubt. Commentary about his skill as a "communicator" or his tactics is in order. And if the Great Communicator is threadbare? It would be mean-spirited to say so. And more, or worse: The press believes in the essential political order. It wants stability. It does not want to remind the Republic that it has delivered itself over to a demagogic true believer whose occasional self-deprecation is his only saving grace—and his greatest realism.

If the president has come off brightly, the Democratic candidates for the nomination have come off as lesser lights. The primary campaign lasted long enough to show each of them to disadvantage. If the media must keep a president spotlit, their task vis-à-vis challengers is, above all, to maintain a sense of the excitement of the race. They aim to keep the audience entertained, and attention spans are short. A study of TV campaign coverage in 1980 showed that roughly two-thirds of the nightly network news stories emphasized the horse race: who was ahead, who behind, who thought to be gaining; about one-sixth emphasized the positions taken by candidates.

I doubt that this year's figures will turn out differently. Dan Rather has defended this preoccupation with standings by claiming that people are "interested" in the horse race. One of the top political TV reporters in San Francisco gave me exactly the same argument. Those who argue from audience "likings" may, of course, be right, or wrong, or the point may be simply self-fulfilling. How does Dan Rather *know* what people are "interested" in, or what they might be "interested" in if it were presented to them coherently and engagingly enough? In any event, this pseudo-democratic defense of the status quo amounts to an entertainment view of the world: "give 'em what they want," as if it's always clear "what they want"—as if the sheer weight of what's available didn't shape people's sense of what it's possible to want, as if people weren't ambivalent.

Ideas of civic virtue are submerged in the interest of the ideology of consumer choice. Treat people as connoisseurs of the standings in the horse race, and they become consumers of politics; treat them as citizens, needing to come to informed judgments, and they might just act that way. But the news media, with television in the lead, treat us as observers of our own political fate, not as makers of it. The implied objects of all this hoopla are the seat-warmers at the spectacle, flattered as sovereigns only to be patronized as consumers.

The media's attitude is not quite cynicism, which requires a base line of standards capable of being deformed or neglected. The very standards are dissolving, since the media's residual sense of responsibility to flush out the candidates' views is drowned out by their need for a "story" that dramatizes conflict and characters. The curious career of Gary Hart's image illustrates the point. For a year before the primaries, Hart was talking up positions. The media weren't much interested, because the "story" then was that Mondale was way ahead of the pack. A little later John Glenn had his moment of glory, partly because *The Right Stuff* was good media fodder. Glenn's star faded, Hart did well in Iowa and New Hampshire, and presto, the "story" was now that Hart had "defied expectations." Having gotten nowhere with actual positions, Hart decided to project the image of "new ideas," and he got good copy with it.

Some in the media, having helped elevate Hart to a close second, now decided to show who was boss. On so-called Super Tuesday (politics again as a sporting event), Roger Mudd bashed Hart around on NBC—"Will you show us your Teddy Kennedy imitation?"—and although some other reporters thought Mudd had gone too far, Hart was quickly stripped of the mantle of innocence he'd so recently acquired. Hart, overconfident, seems to have started believing his press notices, and his "gaffes," amplified by the media, helped slow his momentum in Illinois. The media, uninterested in analyzing dull "positions," focused on the aura of "new ideas," and set him up for Mondale's much-repeated query, "Where's the beef?"

"You know me," was Mondale's refrain against his less experienced opponents. "What you see is what you get." (As if this were a self-evident recommendation!) But, of course, the Mondale that the electorate knows is a canned Mondale, and

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what we see is what we are permitted to see by the collaboration of candidates and media. At a certain point, the difference between candidate and concocted image becomes purely formal. (It has to be added, in Mondale's behalf, that he got more media mileage out of his one-liners than his more complicated statements—sentences too long for TV news clips.) In this situation, candidates do not so much take positions as "position themselves," and mirrors flash into mirrors. Knowing reporters are matched by knowing citizens, handicappers all, whose involvement is vicarious.

IN THE END, however dizzying and distracting this process of image-making, the media, like magnifying glasses in the sun, concentrate but do not invent. The candidates make their own images, to paraphrase Marx, but not in conditions of their own making. The images they flash can get out of their control. The meaning of this situation is not to be found in the old vocabulary of manipulation, demagoguery, charisma, because it is not altogether clear who, if anyone, is in charge. Thus the irony: candidates like Ronald Reagan and Jesse Jackson, whose careers are inconceivable but for their command of the media, come to feel hurt by the scrutiny of those self-same channels of exposure. Those who live by the spotlight can die by it. Gary Hart's crack about New Jersey as an inferior place to campaign, uttered in Los Angeles in late May, was instantly relayed to Newark. Mondale's attack on Hart in Chicago for being, in effect, soft on communism was instantly relayed everywhere else, discrediting him with the left wing of the Democratic electorate.

The major beneficiary of all this is probably cynicism: the knowing audience—clued in to the candidates' off-screen maneuvers, made privy to the candidates' stratagems and ratings—becomes adept at following the great shell game. Everyone can become an armchair tactician. Thus, unintendedly, the media's exercises in demystification contribute to a higher-order mystification. Positions do not get clarified for substantial debate. The pageantry serves the interest of evasion. The candidates' televised debates are a partial exception but even here, the format is generally so slick that a clever tactic—like Reagan's 1980 "There you go again" to Carter—can prove enormously influential. Phrase-making and face-making are rewarded when the candidates think they can get mileage out of them. To the extent that the parties are weak, the candidates' personal aura takes on an unwarranted importance. And then, of course, the candidates' capacity to mobilize national followings helps keep the party structures weak.

In the end, the striking thing is the discrepancy, the bad fit, between the campaign—its glitter, gloss, and slapdash quality—and the awesome magnitude of presidential power. When so much hangs on the electorate's choice, you might think that the media could find a higher responsibility. But their smugness complements the candidates' own, and so no easy rectification is in sight. □

Harold Meyerson

At the Democratic Convention . . .

San Francisco, July 23

"It's been a good convention," said Machinist President William Winpisinger, who four years earlier had walked out on the last night of the Democratic National Convention rather than support the Carter ticket. "The Democrats have had their spirit restored. They've had their party redefined."

No one surveying the sea of flag-waving delegates—and no one who witnessed the emotions unleashed by Jesse Jackson's address or Geraldine Ferraro's nomination—could doubt that the Democrats' spirit has been restored. But how, or even whether, the party has been redefined remains open to question.

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For the Democratic party has yet to answer the one question that is fundamental to its identity: after welfare-state liberalism, what? Walter Mondale's speech (and Mario Cuomo's, too) managed to sound communitarian, populist, anticorporate themes without really affirming the virtues of the welfare state.

The 1984 platform contains no commitment to full employment or national health insurance; in these matters, it is the weakest in decades. Nowhere in Mondale's speech did he even mention his mentor: who would have thought Fritz Mondale's convention would banish the ghost of Hubert Humphrey? And yet, labor and such full-employment advocates as California Congressman Augustus Hawkins went through the convention secure in the conviction that Mondale is better on jobs and the welfare state than he can afford to let on.

The 1984 Democratic Convention marked the reassertion of the forces in the party that had marched on Solidarity Day to a position of coequality with those forces in the party that had acquiesced in Ronald Reagan's dismantling of the welfare state. Despite the unity of Solidarity Day, however, it was as distinct groups with differing agendas that labor, women, blacks, and Hispanics had their impact on the party in 1984.

ALL OF THIS YEAR'S historic firsts within the party are the peculiar contributions of one or another of the party's constituencies. It is the year of the labor presidential candidacy, of the successful campaign for a woman as vice-presidential nominee, of the black presidential candidacy—even, at the last minute, of a partial roll-call boycott of the least organized of party constituencies, the Hispanics.

In part, then, the party has been redefined more clearly as the terrain of the organized social movements of the past 50 years, some of them only now coming of age—all of them thrown into unprecedented activity by the wrenching dismantling of the welfare state, which they helped to create in the 1930s and '60s, and which in turn empowered them. The interesting—indeed, historic—events at this convention were the women's, black, Hispanic, and labor caucuses, not the state delegation meetings. The regionalism of past conventions was in marked eclipse; what mattered were the national constituencies.

• But this is not the whole story. 1984 was also a year of intraparty class war, Yuppie against labor; the Democrats now are also the party of the neoliberals. Forty years ago, such people would have been Wendell Willkie Republicans; today, with Reaganauts in control of the Republican party, they are Democrats over issues of foreign and social policy. They are often at odds with the party's other movements, though, over economic policy, and seem unable to understand the necessity for group action among the less affluent. (Gary Hart's disparagement of both Mondale and NOW for their handling of the vice-presidential selection process typifies the neoliberal distaste for organized group politics.) The Yuppie phenomenon is in part generational, but it is also a counterrevolution of economically powerful elements in the Democratic party against those social movements that moved this year to retake the party. Weighing platform against rhetoric, one could say that the neoliberals fought the movements to a draw.

It is not, of course, that the Yuppies *in vacuo* are responsible for the Democrats' move away from welfare-state liberalism. The politics of Hubert Humphrey were premised on an America so dominant in the world economy that a welfare state and a huge corporate sector could both be sustained. The Democratic party is not yet redefined because it has yet to choose between those paths. To their credit, most of the party activists, certainly most of the delegates, reject the narrow neoliberal vision and responded coolly to Gary Hart's cool speech. But neither do they yet favor a more decisive tilt toward social democracy—or, at least, they can't figure out a way to afford it.

• Jesse Jackson's campaign put forth the most forthrightly social democratic programs this year—but the American ideological spectrum has shifted so far right in the past decade that in some of its particulars Jesse Jackson's 1984 campaign was less radical than Henry Jackson's in 1976. If Scoop called for national health insurance and Jesse didn't, it isn't a reflection on the radicalism of these individuals but on the narrowing terrain for welfare-state politics in a declining economy.

• So it is that the largest, most tightly organized bloc of delegates opted for silence. Labor accounted for 25 percent of all delegates, rivaling its all-time high of 27 percent at the 1980 convention, when it supported two candidates. It is a remarkable figure, considering that almost all of labor's delegates were on the Mondale slate, and that 14 percent of all delegates—and a higher percentage of Mondale's—were public and party officials present at the convention by virtue of holding office rather than by having won election as delegates. That is to say, labor comprised a majority of the *elected* Mondale delegates—which is no more than a fair reflection of labor's share of the work in the Mondale campaign.

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But Mondale had been so stigmatized for his ties to labor, and labor was so far from embodying a consensus of positions within the party, that labor deliberately took a quiet role. A resolution from the floor of the AFL–CIO delegates' caucus to bind labor delegates to the Mondale platform planks was discouraged from the podium, though labor's floor-whip operation made sure few labor delegates strayed from the Mondale positions. By and large, unions deliberately confined themselves to working behind the scenes, lobbying against the vice-presidential aspirations of Lloyd Bentsen and the elevation of Bert Lance to DNC chair. If, as Michael Harrington has argued, labor comprises a hidden social democracy within the Democratic party, seldom has it been larger, or more hidden.

• The more intriguing possibility is that women are coming to comprise a distinct intraparty force with similar social democratic politics (blacks, it is clear, already do). There are data suggesting that the gender gap exists not only on issues of war and peace but on those of social spending as well. Geraldine Ferraro's acceptance speech balanced cultural conservatism with an explicit defense of social spending. Indeed, Ferraro has voted for the Congressional Black Caucus budget, the nearest thing to a social democratic prescription for the American economy to have reached the floor of the House.

PLANS ARE AFOOT THAT, even if only partially executed, would give the Democratic party—and the American polity—a more social democratic tinge. For the first time in recent memory, the party and its movements seem serious about voter registration. The major thrust of the AFL–CIO caucus was to promote the one-on-one voter registration program this summer and fall, using shop stewards to register members at the work sites. (AFSCME, to take one example, plans to register 100,000 members this year; in 1980, it registered 10,000.) Such semipopulist governors as Mario Cuomo of New York and Mark White of Texas have sought to authorize agency-based registration; and Mondale apparently was very serious about considering Tom Bradley and Henry Cisneros as running mates precisely because of their potential to expand the electorate among minorities.

If anything would shift the balance of forces within the Democratic party, it is increased voter registration. It has never been a neoliberal priority. Indeed, Jerry Brown scorned it, and most of the "Class of '74," who come from suburban districts where registration is high, could well be threatened in statewide or nationwide primaries by a sizable expansion of minority and underclass representation in the electorate. Clearly, this is something Fritz Mondale cannot afford to ignore. However inadvertently, then, the Democratic party may soon be redefined for the better.

BEYOND QUESTION, the party's spirit has soared. Just as Martin Luther King contended that the liberation of American blacks would liberate American whites as well, so Walter Mondale's selection of Geraldine Ferraro seems to tap reserves of emotion among all manner of those gathered for the convention.

The feeling was not only one of liberation; less profoundly, there was optimism that the ticket might just win. "I'm beginning to believe it myself," one major union international legislative director said on the last day of the convention. "I don't want cold reality to get in my way." But even should the ticket not prevail, the nomination of Geraldine Ferraro as vice-president means that reality itself is not quite so cold as it was one month ago. □

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Herman Schwartz

In Defense of Affirmative Action

A Look at Realities, a Reply to Critics

The Reagan administration's assault on the rights of minorities and women has focused on the existing policy of affirmative action. This strategy may be shrewd politics but it is mean-spirited morally and insupportable legally.

The attack on affirmative action is only a small part of this administration's campaign against the hard-won rights of blacks, women, and other groups that suffer the inequities of society. Since 1964 this country has developed and refined a body of constitutional, statutory, and regulatory approaches designed to exorcise the existence and effects of the racism and sexism so deeply entrenched in our society. Until 1981 all of our presidents, to a greater or lesser extent, contributed to this effort, even when, like Richard Nixon, they were less than enthusiastic. The Reagan administration has broken with this tradition. President Reagan's spokespeople—Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights William Bradford Reynolds and Reagan's Civil Rights Commission appointees Clarence Pendleton and Morris Abram—declare their unlimited devotion to fighting discrimination and furthering civil rights, and in Abram's case there is an honorable track record. But the administration's record has been one of across-the-board hostility to civil rights, and though the politically potent issue of affirmative action may have dominated rhetorically, it actually represents only part of the offensive.

Examples are numerous. The Reagan administration vigorously supported tax exemption for schools that discriminate against blacks. It crusaded for a specific intent rule that would have greatly handicapped both federal enforcement and private plaintiffs in voting rights and housing cases, and grudgingly surrendered on voting rights when Congress overwhelmingly declined to go along. It has consistently been permissive regarding voting law changes that blacks have questioned, as was the case in Louisiana and North Carolina. It has approved previously rejected proposals by Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina regarding compliance with federal court orders to rid their higher education systems of racial discrimination; has held up as a model a school desegregation plan it negotiated in Bakersfield, California, which the *New York Times* called a "blueprint for evasion and for continuing the administration's lax approach to school desegregation"; and has intervened against black plaintiffs in school desegregation cases, with Mr. Reynolds in a South Carolina case instructing his trial attorneys to make "those bastards . . . jump through every hoop."

Judicial and other appointments have gone overwhelmingly to white males, even in the heavily black District of Columbia, where only 3 of 14 judges appointed by Reagan have been members of racial minorities.

Where women are concerned, the administration has urged sharp limitations on the nondiscrimination obligations of educational institutions receiving federal money, has opposed the Equal Rights Amendment, and has opposed equal pay for equal work. It has also refused to follow a congressional mandate that

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the Department of Justice intervene frequently on behalf of retarded, mentally disturbed, and other children and adults institutionalized in intolerable conditions. Neither has it enforced §504 of the Disabled Persons Civil Rights Act, which outlaws discrimination, but instead it has tried to reduce the obligation of federal agencies and others to accommodate the handicapped.

All these acts and policies are in addition to the administration's position on goals and timetables and in most cases represent a 180-degree shift from the position of all prior administrations. Most revealing of this shift is the administration's corruption of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, transforming it from an independent conscience of the national community, committed to advancing civil rights and free from political interference, to an arm of the administration committed to promoting antiminority, antiwomen, and antihandicapped policies.

All this is perhaps not surprising, given a president who as a governor and an opinion leader had opposed every major civil rights law enacted by Congress in the last 20 years, though now Mr. Reynolds has only praise for these same statutes, which he claims mandate "race neutrality."

Affirmative action has been defined as "a public or private program designed to equalize hiring and admission opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups by taking into consideration those very characteristics which have been used to deny them equal treatment."[1] The controversy swirls primarily around the use of numerical goals and timetables for hiring or promotion, for university admissions, and for other benefits. It is fueled by the powerful strain of individualism that runs through American history and belief.

It is a hard issue, about which reasonable people can differ. Insofar as affirmative action is designed to compensate the disadvantaged for past racism, sexism, and other discrimination, many understandably believe that today's majority should not have to pay for their ancestors' sins. But somehow we must undo the cruel consequences of the racism and sexism that still plague us, both for the sake of the victims and to end the enormous human waste that costs society so much. Civil Rights Commission Chairman Pendleton has conceded that discrimination is not only still with us but is, as he put it, "rampant." As recently as January 1984, the dean of faculty at Amherst College wrote in the *New York Times:*

> In my contacts with a considerable range of academic institutions, I have become aware of pervasive residues of racism and sexism, even among those whose intentions and conscious beliefs are entirely nondiscriminatory. Indeed, I believe most of us are afflicted with such residues. Beyond the wrongs of the past are the wrongs of the present. Most discriminatory habits in academia are nonactionable; affirmative action goals are our only instrument for focusing sustained attention.

The plight of black America not only remains grave, but in many respects, it is getting worse. The black unemployment rate—21 percent in early 1983—is double that for whites and the gap continues to increase. For black 20- to 24-year-old males, the rate—an awful 30 percent—is almost triple that for whites; for black teenagers the rate approaches 50 percent. More than half of all black children under three years of age live in homes below the poverty line. The gap between white and black family income, which prior to the '70s had narrowed a bit, has steadily edged wider, so that black-family income is now only 55 percent of that of whites. Only 3 percent of the nation's lawyers and doctors are black and only 4 percent of its managers, but over 50 percent of its maids and garbage collectors. Black life expectancy is about six years less than that of whites; the black infant mortality rate is nearly double.

Although the situation for women, of all races, is not as bad, the average earnings of women still, at most, are only two-thirds of those of their male counterparts. And the economic condition of black women, who now head 41 percent of the 6.4 million black families, is particularly bad; a recent Wellesley study found that black women are not only suffering in the labor market, but they receive substantially less public assistance and child support than white women. The economic con-

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dition of female household heads of any race is just as deplorable: 90 percent of the 8.4 million single-parent homes are headed by women, and more than half are below the poverty line. Bureau of Labor Statistics data reveal that in 1983 women actually earned *less* than two-thirds of their male counterparts' salaries, and black women earned only 84 percent of the white female incomes. In his 1984 State of the Union address, President Reagan claimed dramatic gains for women during the 1983 recovery. A *Washington Post* analysis the next day charitably described his claims as "overstated," noting that the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports (on which the president relied) showed that "there was no breakthrough. The new jobs which the president cited included many in sales and office work, where women have always found work" and are paid little.

We must close these gaps so that we do not remain two nations, divided by race and gender. Although no one strategy can overcome the results of centuries of inequity, the use of goals and timetables in hiring and other benefit distribution programs has helped to make modest improvements. Studies in 1983 show, for example, that from 1974 to 1980 minority employment with employers subject to federal affirmative action requirements rose 20 percent, almost twice the increase elsewhere. Employment of women by covered contractors rose 15 percent, but only 2 percent among others. The number of black police officers nationwide rose from 24,000 in 1970 to 43,500 in 1980; that kind of increase in Detroit produced a sharp decline in citizen hostility toward the police and a concomitant increase in police efficiency. There were also large jumps in minority and female employment among firefighters, and sheet metal and electrical workers.

Few other remedies work as well or as quickly. As the New York City Corporation Counsel told the Supreme Court in the *Fullilove* case about the construction industry (before Mayor Edward Koch decided that affirmative action was an "abomination"), "less drastic means of attempting to eradicate and remedy discrimination have been attempted repeatedly and continuously over the past decade and a half. They have all failed."

What, then, is the basis for the assault on affirmative action?

Apart from the obvious political expediency and ideological reflex of this administration's unvarying conclusion that the "haves" deserve government help and the "have-nots" don't, President Reagan and his allies present two related arguments: (1) hiring and other distributional decisions should be made solely on the basis of individual merit; (2) racial preferences are always evil and will take us back to *Plessy* vs. *Ferguson* and worse.

Quoting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, and Roy Wilkins to support the claim that anything other than total race neutrality is "discriminatory," Assistant Attorney General Reynolds warns that race consciousness will "creat[e] . . . a racial spoils system in America," "stifle the creative spirit," erect artificial barriers, and divide the society. It is, he says, unconstitutional, unlawful, and immoral.

Midge Decter, writing in the *Wall Street Journal* a few years ago, sympathized with black and female beneficiaries of affirmative action programs for the "self-doubts" and loss of "self-regard" that she is sure they suffer, "spiritually speaking," for their "unearned special privileges."

Whenever we take race into account to hand out benefits, declares Linda Chavez, the new executive director of the Reagan Civil Rights Commission, we "discriminate," "destroy[ing] the sense of self."

The legal position was stated by Morris Abram, in explaining why the reshaped Commission hastened to do Reagan's bidding at its very first meeting by withdrawing prior Commission approval of goals and timetables:

> I do not need any further study of a principle that comes from the basic bedrock of the Constitution, in which the words say that every person in the land shall be entitled to the equal protection of the law. Equal means equal. Equal does not mean you have separate lists of blacks and whites for promotion, any more than you have separate accommodations for blacks and whites for eating. Nothing will ultimately divide a society more than this kind of preference and this kind of reverse discrimination.[2]

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In short, any form of race preference is equivalent to racism.

All of this represents a nadir of "Newspeak," all too appropriate for this administration in Orwell's year. For it has not only persistently fought to curtail minority and women's rights in many contexts, but it has used "separate lists" based on color, sex, and ethnic origin whenever politically or otherwise useful.

For example, does anyone believe that blacks like Civil Rights Commission Chairman Clarence Pendleton or Equal Employment Opportunities Commission Chairman Clarence Thomas were picked because of the color of their *eyes?* Or that Linda Chavez Gersten was made the new executive director for reasons having nothing to do with the fact that her maiden and professional surname is Chavez?

Perhaps the most prominent recent example of affirmative action is President Reagan's selection of Sandra Day O'Connor for the Supreme Court. Obviously, she was on a "separate list," because on any unitary list this obscure lower-court state judge, with no federal experience and no national reputation, would never have come to mind as a plausible choice for the highest court. (Incidentally, despite Ms. Decter's, Mr. Reynolds's, and Ms. Chavez's concern about the loss of "self-regard" suffered by beneficiaries of such preferences, "spiritually speaking" Justice O'Connor seems to be bearing her loss and spiritual pain quite easily.) And, like so many other beneficiaries of affirmative action given an opportunity that would otherwise be unavailable, she may perform well.

This is not to say that Reagan should not have chosen a woman. The appointment ended decades of shameful discrimination against women lawyers, discrimination still practiced by Reagan where the lower courts are concerned, since he has appointed very few female federal judges apart from Justice O'Connor—of 123 judgeships, Reagan has appointed no women to the courts of appeals and only 10 to the district benches. Of these judgeships, 86 percent went to white males. But the choice of Sandra O'Connor can be explained and justified only by the use of affirmative action and a separate list, not by some notion of neutral "individual merit" on a single list.

But is affirmative action constitutional and legal? Is its legal status, as Mr. Abram claims, so clear by virtue of principles drawn from the "basic bedrock of the Constitution" that no "further study" is necessary?

Yes, but not in the direction that he and this administration want to go. Affirmative action is indisputably constitutional. Not once but many times the Supreme Court has upheld the legality of considering race to remedy the wrongs of prejudice and discrimination. In 1977, for example, in *United Jewish Organizations* vs. *Carey,*[3] the Supreme Court upheld a New York statute that "deliberately increased the nonwhite majorities in certain districts in order to enhance the opportunity for election of nonwhite representatives from those districts," even if it disadvantaged certain white Jewish communities. Three members of the Court including Justice Rehnquist explained that "no racial slur or stigma with respect to whites or any other race" was involved. In the *Bakke* case,[4] five members of the Court upheld the constitutionality of a state's favorable consideration of race as a factor in university admissions; four members would have sustained a fixed 16 percent quota. In *United Steelworkers of America* vs. *Weber,*[5] a 5:2 majority held that private employers could set up a quota system with separate lists for selecting trainees for a newly created craft program. In *Fullilove* vs. *Klutznick,*[6] six members of the Court led by Chief Justice Burger unequivocally upheld a congressional set-aside of 10 percent for minority contractors on federal public works programs.[7]

All members of the present Court except for Justice O'Connor have passed on affirmative action in one or more of these four cases, and each has upheld it at one time or another. Although the decisions have been based on varying grounds, with many differing opinions, the legal consequence is clear: affirmative action is lawful under both the Constitution and the statutes. To nail the point home, the Court in January 1984 not once but *twice* rejected the Justice Department's effort to get it to reconsider the issue where affirmative action hiring plans are adopted by governmental bodies (the Detroit Police Department and the New York

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State Corrections system), an issue left open in *Weber*, which had involved a private employer.

The same result obtains on the lower-court levels. Despite the persistent efforts of Reagan's Justice Department, all the courts of appeals have unanimously and repeatedly continued to sustain hiring quotas.

Nor is this anything new. Mr. Reynolds told an audience of prelaw students in January 1984 that the Fourteenth Amendment was intended to bar taking race into account for any purpose at all, and to ensure race neutrality. "That was why we fought the Civil War," he once told the *New York Times*. If so, he knows something that the members of the 1865–66 Congress, who adopted that amendment and fought the war, did not.

Less than a month after Congress approved the Fourteenth Amendment in 1866 the very same Congress enacted eight laws exclusively for the freedmen, granting preferential benefits regarding land, education, banking facilities, hospitals, and more. No comparable programs existed or were established for whites. And that Congress knew what it was doing. The racial preferences involved in those programs were vigorously debated with a vocal minority led by President Andrew Johnson, who argued that the preferences wrongly discriminated against whites.

All these governmental actions reflect the obvious point that, as Justice Harry Blackmun has said, "in order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way." Warren Burger, our very conservative chief justice, had made the point even clearer in a prophetic commentary on this administration's efforts to get the courts to ignore race when trying to remedy the ravages of past discrimination. Striking down in 1971 a North Carolina statute that barred considerations of race in school assignments, the chief justice said:

> The statute exploits an apparently neutral form to control school assignments' plans by directing that they be "color blind"; *that requirement, against the background of segregation, would render illusory the promise of Brown.* Just as the race of students must be considered in determining whether a constitutional violation has occurred so also must race be considered in formulating a remedy . . . *[color blindness] would deprive school authorities of the one tool [race consideration] absolutely essential to fulfillment of their constitutional obligation to eliminate existing dual school systems.* [Emphasis added.][8]

So much for "basic bedrock" constitutional principles. But this is hardly surprising from an administration in which a White House spokesman denied that the Justice Department was failing to enforce the law—"unless you call all of the decisions of the Supreme Court the law of the land," he explained.

But what of the morality of affirmative action? Does it amount to discrimination? Is it true, as Brian Weber's lawyer argued before the Supreme Court, that "you can't avoid discrimination by discriminating"? Will racially influenced hiring take us back to *Plessy* vs. *Ferguson*, as Pendleton and Reynolds assert? Were Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Roy Wilkins, and other black leaders against it?

Hardly. Indeed, it is hard to contain one's outrage at this perversion of what Dr. King, Justice Marshall, and others have said, at this manipulation of their often sorrow-laden eloquence, in order to deny a handful of jobs, school admissions, and other necessities for a decent life to a few disadvantaged blacks out of the many who still suffer from discrimination and would have few opportunities otherwise.

No one can honestly equate a remedial preference for a disadvantaged (and qualified) minority member with the brutality inflicted on blacks and other minorities by Jim Crow laws and practices. The preference may take away some benefits from some white men, but none of them is being beaten, lynched, denied the right to use a bathroom, a place to sleep or eat, being forced to take the dirtiest jobs or denied any work at all, forced to attend dilapidated and mind-killing schools, subjected to brutally unequal justice, or stigmatized as an inferior being.

Setting aside, after proof of discrimination, a few places a year for qualified minorities out of hundreds and perhaps thousands of employees, as in the Kaiser plant in the *Weber* case, or 16

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medical-school places out of 100 as in *Bakke,* or 10 percent of federal public work contracts as in *Fullilove,* or even 50 percent of new hires for a few years as in some employment cases—this has nothing in common with the racism that was inflicted on helpless minorities, and it is a shameful insult to the memory of the tragic victims to lump together the two.

This administration claims that it does favor "affirmative action" of a kind: "employers should seek out and train minorities," Linda Chavez told a *Washington Post* interviewer. Apart from the preference involved in setting aside money for "seeking out" and "training" minorities (would this include preference in training programs like the *Weber* plan, whose legality Mr. Reynolds said was "wrongly decided"?), the proposed remedy is ineffectual—it just doesn't work. As the "old" Civil Rights Commission had reported, "By the end of the 1960s, enforcement officials realized that discernible indicators of progress were needed." Consequently, "goals and timetables" came into use.[9]

Questions may nevertheless remain. Does affirmative action divide people? Is group thinking immoral? Dangerous? Where does it stop—aren't we all minorities, and aren't we all therefore entitled? If so, won't we wind up with claims totaling 200 percent of the pie? Should a white policeman or fire fighter with ten years in the department be laid off when a black or a woman with less seniority is kept because an affirmative action decree is in force? Aren't those denied a job or another opportunity because of an affirmative action program often innocent of any wrong against the preferred group and just as much in need of the opportunities?

The last question is the most troubling. Brian Weber was not a rich man and he had to support a family on a modest salary, just like any black worker. A craft job would have been a significant step up in money, status, and working conditions. And *he* hadn't discriminated against anyone. Why should he pay for Kaiser's wrongs?

A closer look at the *Weber* case brings some other factors to light. Even if there had been no separate list for blacks, Weber would not have gotten the position, for there were too many other whites ahead of him anyway. Moreover, but for the affirmative action plan, there would not have been any craft training program at the plant at all, for *any* whites.

Furthermore, even with the separate list, the number of whites adversely affected was really very small. The Kaiser plan (adopted "voluntarily" to avoid employment discrimination suits by blacks and the loss of federal contracts) contemplated hiring only three to four minority members a year, out of a craft work force of 275–300 and a total work force of thousands. In the first year of its operation, Kaiser still selected only a handful of blacks, because it also brought in 22 outside craftsmen, of whom only one was black. In the 1980 *Fullilove* case, in which the Supreme Court upheld a 10 percent set-aside of federal public works projects for minority contractors, only 0.25 percent of the total annual expenditure for construction in the United States was involved. In *Bakke,* only 16 places out of 100 at one medical school were set aside for minorities. A new Boston University special admissions program for black medical students will start with three a year, with the hope of rising to ten, increasing the minority enrollment at the school by 2 percent.

The *Weber* case discloses another interesting aspect of affirmative action plans. Because they can adversely affect the careers of majority white males, creative ingenuity is often expended to prevent this from happening. In *Weber*, a new craft program benefiting both whites and blacks was set up. Although white employees and the union had been clamoring for such a program for many years, it wasn't until Kaiser felt it had to adopt an affirmative action program that it granted this request. In the lay-off cases, time sharing and other ways of avoiding the dismissals—including raising more money—can be devised. So much for Mr. Reynolds's worries about "stifling the creative spirit."

Strains can and do result, especially if deliberately stirred up. But strain is not inevitable: broad-ranging goals and timetable programs for women and blacks were instituted in the Bell Telephone Company with no such trou-

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bles. The same holds true elsewhere, especially when, as in *Weber*, the program creates new, previously unavailable opportunities for whites. On the other hand, some whites may be upset, even if, as the administration urges, the remedies are limited to specific identifiable victims of discriminatory practices. If a black applicant can prove that an employer wrongly discriminated against him personally, he would be entitled to the seniority and other benefits that he would have had but for the discrimination—with the administration's blessing—and this would give him competitive seniority over some white employees regardless of those employees' innocence. The same thing happens constantly with veterans' and other preferences, and few opponents of affirmative action seem to be upset by that.

Among some Jews, affirmative action brings up bitter memories of ceiling quotas, which kept them out of schools and jobs that could on merit have been theirs. This has produced a serious and nasty split within the civil rights movement. But affirmative action goals and timetables are really quite different. Whereas quotas against Jews, Catholics, and others were ceilings to limit and keep these groups out of schools and jobs, today's "benign preferences" are designed to be floors that let minorities into a few places they would not ordinarily enter, and with relatively little impact on others.

There is also a major confusion, exploited by opponents, resulting from the fact that we are almost all ethnic or religious minorities. Of course we are. And if it were shown that any minority is being victimized by intentional discrimination *and* that the only way to get more of that minority into a relatively representative portion of the work force or school is through an affirmative action plan, then these people would be entitled to such a remedy.

There is really nothing inherently wrong about taking group identity into account, so long as the person selected is qualified, a prerequisite that is an essential element of all affirmative action programs.[10] We do it all the time, with hardly a murmur of protest from anyone. We take group identity into account when we put together political slates, when a university gives preference to applicants from a certain part of the country or to the children of alumni, when Brandeis University restricts itself to Jews in choosing a president (as it did when it chose Morris Abram) or Notre Dame to Roman Catholics or Howard University to blacks, when we give preference to veterans for jobs, promotions, and the like, when this administration finds jobs in government for children of cabinet members. Some of these examples are less laudable than others. But surely none of these seldom criticized practices can be valued above, or has the serious purpose of undoing, the effects of past and present discrimination. In choosing a qualified applicant because of a race preference we merely acknowledge, as Morton Horwitz has pointed out, "the burdens, stigmas, and scars produced by history . . . the injustices heaped on his ancestors and, through them on him. The history and culture of oppression, transmitted through legally anonymous generations, is made antiseptic when each individual is treated as a separate being, disconnected from history."[11]

In some cases, moreover, group-oriented choices are necessary for effective performance of the job. Justice Powell in the *Bakke* case noted the importance of ethnic and other diversity for a university, as a justification for taking race into account as one factor in medical school admissions. He did stress that the choice must be individualized, but his choice of the Harvard program as a model gave away the ball game because a key part of it (described in the appendix to his opinion but not in the excerpt he chose to quote) is a certain number of minority admissions as a goal.

One area where effective job performance almost mandates such group consideration is precisely the area where the administration has chosen to make its stand against affirmative action in the courts: police departments. The confrontation of an almost all-white police force with an angry, socially depressed minority community has produced violence, police brutality (thoroughly documented by the pre-Reagan Civil Rights Commission), and inefficient police work. Those unhappy conditions were in fact a major reason for extending Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to state and local governments.

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Such race-conscious selection within police departments has worked. In Detroit, a largely black city where racial friction between a nearly all-white police force and ghetto dissidents had been epidemic and bloody—one such incident sparked the violence in 1968 that led to the death of 34 people—the police department voluntarily instituted an affirmative action plan that, as the Justice Department itself has admitted, "was expressly made as a response to undeniable past discrimination against blacks that had created a police force that was largely unresponsive to the concerns of a substantial portion of the City's population." Since then racial incidents and police/community frictions have declined.[12]

Affirmative action has, of course, not always been completely effective. No policy can be. Certain marginally qualified students have been unable to meet the academic demands of colleges and professional schools. Once these problems emerged, however, many schools set up special remedial programs that, like the Kaiser craft training plan, often benefited needy whites as well. Unfortunately, the Reagan administration's cutbacks on educational programs (for all its talk of support for "affirmative action" in improving education and training) have decimated these programs, with the result that far fewer marginally qualified minority students are being admitted to colleges and professional schools.

The seniority layoff problem is undeniably the most troubling, for in this case people lose jobs they *have,* obviously a more serious matter than not getting a job you want but don't have. But layoffs on the traditional "last in, first out" basis will undo what little progress we have made toward racial equity.[13] And a layoff of whites is far more likely to result in quick rehiring than a layoff of blacks, as Boston and Memphis both showed: when the courts in those cases ordered whites to be laid off, money suddenly materialized and all the laid-off workers were promptly rehired.[14]

Nevertheless, this is the one situation in which the Supreme Court has struck down an affirmative action plan. In the Memphis firefighters' case, the Court ruled that the concern for seniority reflected in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 barred federal courts from overriding seniority to maintain gains for minorities from affirmative action plans.[15]

There are indeed problems with affirmative action, but not of the kind or magnitude that Messrs. Reynolds and Abram claim: problems about whether these programs work, whether they impose heavy burdens, how these burdens can be lightened, and the like. They are not the basis for charges that affirmative action is equivalent to racism and for perverting the words of Dr. King and others.

"Equal is equal" proclaims Morris Abram, and that's certainly true. But it is just as true that equal treatment of unequals perpetuates and aggravates inequality. And gross inequality is what we still have today. As William Coleman, secretary of transportation in the Ford administration, put it,

> For black Americans, racial equality is a tradition without a past. Perhaps, one day America will be color-blind. It takes an extraordinary ignorance of actual life in America today to believe that day has come.... [For blacks], there is another American "tradition"—one of slavery, segregation, bigotry, and injustice.

One final note. After so many years of invidious, cruel color-consciousness, of devastating "special treatment," and of harmful "group thinking," one cannot avoid suspicion about the sudden demand for color neutrality just as society begins trying to undo the harm wrought by hostile color-consciousness. Skepticism seems especially justified when some of those making the demand have in the past always been indifferent to color-hurt minorities and still oppose the struggle for equal rights in almost every other sphere. This is, after all, an administration that does not include (unless Mr. Abram is considered an administration man) a single person with a record of leadership or even of supporting activity on behalf of civil rights and minority advance. That could not have been said of any previous administration of the past 50 years. It is an administration whose leader, when asked whether he agreed with Senator Jesse Helms that FBI files would

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show Martin Luther King, Jr. had ties to Communists, replied with a grin, "We'll know in about 35 years, won't we?" Perhaps the most appropriate lesson from all this is what Hamlet learned: "That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain."

Notes

[1] Myrl Duncan, "The Future of Affirmative Action: A Jurisprudential Critique," *Harvard Civil Rights–Civil Liberties Law Review*, 17:503 (1982). Another description is Ann Fagan Ginger's: "Affirmative action means that someone who has the potential for being a good employee, apprentice, supervisor, or professional, but who lacks the formal, paper qualification customarily required, is nonetheless offered an opportunity to get into the classroom, apprenticeship program, or job, in order to enable the applicant to overcome the effects of past discrimination." Ginger, "Who Needs Affirmative Action," *Harvard Civil Rights–Civil Liberties Law Review*, 14 (1979): 265, 268.

[2] *New York Times*, January 18, 1984.

[3] 430 U.S. [Supreme Court] 144 (1977).

[4] *University of California* vs. *Bakke*, 438 U.S. [Supreme Court] 262 (1978).

[5] 443 U.S. [Supreme Court] 199 (1979).

[6] 448 U.S. [Supreme Court] 448 (1980).

[7] The Reagan administration has nevertheless reduced the number of government contracts going to minority firms by almost 10 percent, reversing a 15-year policy. And in some cases where local governments have adopted minority set-asides, the Justice Department is trying to annul them as unconstitutional, despite the Supreme Court's decision in *Fullilove*.

[8] *Board of Education* vs. *Swann*, 402 U.S. [Supreme Court] 43, 45–46.

[9] U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Affirmative Action in the 1980s: Dismantling the Process of Discrimination*, November 1981, p. 19.

[10] Of the 16 minority admittees in *Bakke*, 15 graduated from the medical school.

[11] Morton Horwitz, "The Jurisprudence of Brown and the Dilemmas of Liberalism," *Harvard Civil Rights–Civil Liberties Law Review* 14 (1979): 599, 610.

[12] In New Orleans as well, the Justice Department is trying to turn the clock back and get the federal court to reverse itself and strike down goals and timetables for police promotion. The first black policeman in New Orleans was not hired until 1950, and the bathrooms were segregated as late as the mid-1960s. A black policewoman was running the department's community-relations operation but was not promoted to the appropriate rank, and of course was paid far less than a similarly responsible white male. New Orleans agreed to a consent decree with promotional goals, which the Justice Department attacked. When the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission tried to file a brief in support of the New Orleans plan, Justice pressured it into not doing so, even though the brief had already been written and approved. Several civil rights organizations obtained a copy of the brief, which was widely available, and, adopting it as their own, brought it to the attention of the court.

[13] The pre-Reagan Civil Rights Commission found that fiscal cutbacks caused by the 1974–75 recession had a devastating effect on minorities in local government. "The recent recession has had a critical impact on minorities and women. Many had only recently obtained their first promising jobs. Increasing numbers had begun to penetrate employment areas of great importance in our society, such as state and local government. Because they have not had time to acquire adequate seniority, however, minority members and women have been affected disproportionately by the personnel cutbacks occasioned by this recession, and much of their limited progress has thereby been obliterated. In light of dismal predictions of slow economic recovery and continuing high unemployment, this recession threatens to lock these groups into place as a permanent, expendable economic and social underclass. . . . In New York City, layoffs in mid–1975 of 371 female officers appointed since January 1973 by the New York City Police Department ended their brief tenure with the previously overwhelmingly male police force. Over half of all Hispanic city workers in New York lost their jobs between July 1974 and November 1975." Quoted from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Last Hired, First Fired: Layoffs and Civil Rights* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1977), pp. 60–61, 25–26.

[14] The primary reason that white Boston police with ten years' seniority were laid off was not that blacks were retained but because of the veterans' preference. In Memphis, the laid-off white firefighters didn't have longer service than the blacks retained because of the affirmative action decree; both groups had equal seniority, but the white workers had priority on an *alphabetical* list.

[15] *Firefighters' Union Local No. 1784* vs. *Stotts*, —— U.S. [Supreme Court] —— (June 12, 1984). The Court's opinion gratuitously went far beyond the lay-off problem, however, and intimated disapproval of court-ordered quotas for hiring or promotion as well. If these intimations become law in a future case, efforts to improve employment opportunities for minorities and women will be devastated. Even without such a decision, the Court's language will probably deter lower courts from entering such decrees until further clarification, and will discourage settlements; also, the Department of Justice immediately announced it would try to reopen and set aside the hundreds of such affirmative action decrees entered since 1969. □

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Allen Graubard

Ideas of Economic Democracy

Workers' Control and Public Rights

Even for committed democrats, it has never been obvious how extensive democratic practices should be. What is the appropriate extent of democratic government, and where, other than in the political realm, is democracy the proper principle of authority?

During the early New Left period, the slogan of "participatory democracy" suggested a maximalist position. Formally democratic structures weren't enough: many radical activists felt that unequal and hence undemocratic power was exerted at meetings simply because some participants were more verbally agile and competent than others. Procedures were suggested for correcting such distortions of equality, requiring, for example, that everyone speak once before anyone was allowed to speak twice. The face-to-face consensus group was idealized as the best if not the only real democracy.[1]

There were attempts to extend democratization to children in elementary schools. And some university students took democracy to mean that all members of the community—faculty, students, clerical and maintenance workers—should share equally in university governance. Some suggested that the family itself needed radical democratic reform. But there was no disagreement on one crucial area—the democratization of the economy.

Through most of human history, economic activity has been embedded within a social and political framework. Eighteenth-century Europe saw a new idea emerge—that economic activity ought to be free of public control. Since the time of Adam Smith, the advocates of free enterprise have been able to repel or absorb major challenges without giving up their essential creed: free markets and private control of productive property. "The great transformation," as Karl Polanyi called it, let the economy run on its own, with good results guaranteed by the "invisible hand." Whatever else happened, the productive promise of capitalism was fulfilled, a story told more eloquently by Marx than by many writers committed to capitalism.

Even at the height of laissez-faire ideology in the 19th and early 20th century, the state was deeply engaged in promoting the interests of business. There never was a time when the state was merely a "watchman" assuring fair competition. The current libertarian vision of a Leviathan state destroying individual liberties is a fantasy in the capitalist West. It helps distract attention from the actuality of state involvement in economic affairs, which is primarily to aid business, as it has always done under capitalism.

For a somewhat different approach to this important subject, see Robert A. Dahl, "Democracy in the Workplace: Is It a Right or a Privilege?", *Dissent*, Winter 1984, and his forthcoming book, *A Preface to Economic Democracy*, to be published next year by the University of California Press.

[1] For a thoughtful discussion of participatory democracy, see Jane Mansbridge: *Beyond Adversary Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 1980). Mansbridge distinguishes the concept of "adversary democracy," based on the assumption of individual interests in constant conflict, from an older idea of "unitary democracy," based on common interests and equal respect.

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Growing governmental intervention in economic affairs has not significantly constrained the most important form of economic liberty—the right of property owners to control production, investment, and work. Hence the fundamental fact about democratic capitalist politics: business holds a uniquely privileged position with respect to government. For a regime to be successful politically, the economy must function well; for this to happen, business must act appropriately. And for business to act appropriately, the government must act appropriately—from the point of view of business.[2]

Under special conditions, large sectors of the society, including business, will find extensive governmental regulation of the economy justified. During World War II the government planned production, rationed consumption, and controlled prices, wages, and the allocation of resources. Business approved and participated, as did every other organized group. It was understood that profits would still be made (even guaranteed), and that such control was only "for the duration." The New Deal, though much more heatedly contested, did show that during severe economic crisis even significant groups within the business community would support extensive governmental curtailment of the rights of free enterprise. Yet a basic consensus on the private control of corporate property survived such conditions.

THE CURRENT ECONOMIC MALAISE would seem to require a radical revision of traditional liberal policies. But unleashing the power of economic liberty and lifting the burdens of regulation and taxation did not spark a general boom as Jack Kemp and Arthur Laffer had promised. The opposite approach emphasizes more governmental involvement in the economy, even planning, at least in the vague apparition of "industrial policy." Planning certainly does not have to be democratic. Soviet-style command economies plan undemocratically, and capitalist states could do so too.[3]

Supporters of planning in the American style, like Felix Rohatyn, assume democratic justification for their proposals. They would say that they should be adopted through democratic political procedures. If a plurality of voters chose the party that represents enlightened sectors of the corporate world advocating "industrial policy," and this policy were then carried through by the president and Congress, this would be "democratic planning" in a fairly obvious sense.

I think there is much to be said for this simple idea of "democratic planning." With regard to the economy, "democratizing" could mean using the existing powers of the state but with a greater scope of activity. Control of key decisions for production and investment, regulation of plant closure, management of money supply, public ownership of utilities and natural resources, creation of infrastructures, such as a large renewable-source energy system and a new rail system (all suggested by Michael Harrington in "A Path for America," *Dissent*, Fall 1982)—all this could be done through democratic government.

The large differences between Harrington's program and those of such corporate planners as Rohatyn aren't, strictly speaking, issues of democracy. All these programs imagine a democratically elected government that would plan economic activities, while restricting the prerogatives of owners more than the dominant American ideology allows. The essential difference lies in the content and spirit of the policies.

The left insists on different priorities concerning welfare and sacrifice, on a different sense of a decent social minimum, a more adversary relation to the views of corporate owners. More decisions would be referred to political bodies on different levels, and workers would participate more actively in enterprise management. Outlining a constitutional and legal arrangement that effectively codifies such "economic democracy" is difficult. It is

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[2] For a useful description of the centrality of business interests in democratic capitalist polities see Charles Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political-Economic Systems* (Basic Books, 1977). The shift to the left by this respected liberal academic seems to have threatened the stability of corporate capitalism. Propagandists at Mobil Oil had their writing gnomes attack Lindblom's book across the country in corporate ads.

[3] See Stephen Cohen's insightful and relevant study, *Modern Capitalist Planning: The French Model* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

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part of describing what real democratic socialism would be like.[4]

The Model of Sweden's Meidner Plan

IN WESTERN DEMOCRACIES, even within socialist movements, there are almost no defenders of the East European model of centralized control of the economy, with state ownership of all productive property. Neither freedom nor economic efficiency is seen as compatible with this version of a planned economy. For democratic socialists, the Meidner Plan, developed in recent years by economists of the Swedish Labor Organization, has emerged as an attractive approach to economic democracy within a mixed political economy.[5]

The basic idea of the Meidner Plan is the "wage-earners' investment fund." Legislation would require that every year a certain proportion of corporate profits—say, 10 or 15 percent—will be transferred as corporate stock to funds owned collectively. Who exactly these owners should be is an issue that remains to be settled theoretically and practically. In some sense, the unions would be the owners of the funds. But the Meidner approach conceives of a much broader collective ownership than traditional profit-sharing schemes, which assigned company stock to individual workers.

The issue of control is even more complex. It wouldn't arise if it were only a question of distributing some stock ownership while the management structure stayed the same. The power of the Meidner Plan—what has generated the intense opposition of the Swedish Employers Confederation—is the prospect that within a relatively short time (15 to 30 years), depending on profit rates and percentage of profits transferred, majority stock ownership and, accordingly, legal control of eligible firms (firms of sufficient size) will be in the hands of the owners of the wage-earners' funds.

Swedish Social Democratic theorists, responding in part to the fear that the plan would give too much power to the trade-union leadership, are looking for structures that would express a more dispersed and democratic form of control.[6] There are proposals for regional boards that would include representatives elected by all voters in the region, as well as representatives of the labor federation and even of private capital. These boards would make basic decisions about the utilization of the accumulating profits. Of course, there would be the question of reinvestment in the firms from which the profits were coming. But there would also be questions as to what new productive investments were appropriate, and what the level of social expenditures should be. There has been talk of using some share of the profits for education of workers in the skills of industrial self-management, for improving public services, and for environmental protection.

An important aspect of democratization would be the radical shifting of criteria for investment. Maximum profitability, the fundamental principle of capitalist economics, would lose its dominant position. And though economic rationality requires concern for profitability, there would also be systematic concern for the usefulness of the products, the "exter-

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[4] Serious attempts are being made to provide such descriptions along with critiques of the current situation. See Martin Carnoy and Derek Shearer, *Economic Democracy* (White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1980); Carnoy, Shearer, and R. Rumbarger, *A New Social Contract* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); Samuel Bowles, David Gordon, Thomas Weisskopf, *Beyond the Wasteland* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1983).

[5] Accounts of the Meidner Plan can be found in Carnoy-Shearer and Bowles-Gordon-Weisskopf (see note 4). A recent description of the situation in Sweden and the current state of thinking among Meidner Plan advocates is Ulf Himmelstrand, "Sweden: Toward Economic Democracy," *Dissent*, Summer 1983. The basic reference is Rudolf Meidner, *Employee Investment Funds: An Approach to Collective Capital Formation* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978).

[6] A critical account of the Meidner Plan by a Swedish writer is N. Elevander, "Sweden," in Benjamin Roberts, ed., *Towards Industrial Democracy—Europe, Japan and the United States* (Montclair, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1979). This emphasizes claims of opponents within Sweden that the plan would threaten pluralist democracy by concentrating power in union leaders. The author, although critical of the plan, feels such criticisms are exaggerated. He agrees with critics within the Social Democratic party who complain that the plan has moved only part way toward economic democracy, that there is insufficient public influence on decisions about capital formation, that unions will very possibly have interests that clash with public planning of the economy through the government. These critics would like to see something like "citizens' funds," under political democratic control.

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nal effects" on environment and employment, on regional planning, and so on.[7]

Presumably, the wage-earners' funds, whatever their structure, would come into a controlling interest in corporate property that would remain legally private (just as in this country it is possible in theory for union pension funds or such institutions as Harvard University to buy up controlling percentages of a corporation's stock).

As owners, these funds then could delegate control to the current managers or attempt a number of different arrangements. This new ownership would be democratic in the complex ways in which the working population of the country, represented by its elected union representatives, and the general citizenry of the region, represented by specially elected board members, would share control of basic economic decisions. (Workers apparently would be doubly counted, voting as citizens and also as workers.)

The democratization achieved by such a radical shift in ownership and control addresses the macroeconomic issue of how to use corporate wealth in more socially responsible and more democratic ways, without adopting the classic socialist solution of "nationalization of the means of production." It is assumed by adherents of the Meidner Plan that macrodemocratization, so to speak, will also strengthen trends toward enterprise-level democratization, the participation of workers in workplace management. But these two dimensions of economic democracy are not necessarily related, though the phrase "economic democracy" mixes them together. Owners and managers of corporate capital and their academic "industrial-relations" experts would like to see these two dimensions kept far apart. To cast an unusual light on the relations between these two aspects of economic democracy, I will make a short digression to tell a strange American story.

Fables of ESOPs: Economic Democracy as "People's Capitalism"

"ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY" is generally taken to be a phrase from left political thought, and on the whole this is justified. The current use of the phrase in the Campaign for Economic Democracy, associated with Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda, refers back to New Deal times. The term is said to have been suggested to Hayden by economist Derek Shearer as a pragmatic American substitute for "socialism"; and Shearer (with Martin Carnoy) has written a book called *Economic Democracy* that presents a democratic socialist program for the United States.

But there is another American use of the phrase. It appears in *The Capitalist Manifesto*, a best-seller of the 1950s by Louis Kelso and Mortimer Adler. Their version of economic democracy begins with a leftist perception—that there is a great concentration of wealth and that this concentration is the source of serious economic, social, and political problems, including poverty, the business cycle, low productivity, alienation on the job, strikes, and social disorder in general. Kelso and Adler propose the democratization of capital ownership as the solution to these troubles. In their view, an adequate, assured income from capital ownership is the ideal material basis for economic independence. The authors imagine "a true capitalism, the economic substructure of democracy, that will produce for the first time in history the ideal classless society in which the whole mass of humankind will constitute a single class."

In practice, however, ESOPs are used to get tax breaks on investment capital, to unload unprofitable subsidiaries on workers desperately trying to preserve their jobs, or as substitutes for more expensive and secure pension plans. Unions have shown no interest in the whole affair, though some academics have

[7] A fascinating example of an attempt by workers to apply such criteria to a long-range production plan in a large enterprise is the saga of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee in Great Britain. The Lucas story is important for any thinking about the various notions of economic democracy, the potential for worker participation in planning, the question of the social responsibility of capital, and the power of the ideological barrier of private property control of productive resources. See Allen Graubard, "We've Never Done It This Way Before," in David Moberg, *Shutdown*, a collection of pieces from *In These Times* (Chicago: In These Times, 1979).

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written favorably of the ESOP as a possible route to worker-controlled enterprises.[8]

The practical result of the Adler-Kelso vision is tax legislation that supports the creation of ESOPs, Employee Stock Ownership Plans; the basic idea is to issue company stock to employees. ESOP is a way of acquiring borrowed funds to purchase the stock, which is then assigned to individual workers. Stock earnings are used to pay back the original loan until the stock is owned free and clear by the new worker-capitalist. This approach applies only to an individual company and its workers, and it falls short of the Adler-Kelso program—alas, never to be realized. It would have enacted federal legislation requiring all corporations to distribute all their profits as stock dividends, while the government would create a lending arrangement to finance a stock portfolio for every American, starting out with the neediest and ending with a utopia of "80 million capitalists."

This program and its more mundane ESOP version can't be considered as serious attempts to deal with the issues of work, ownership, and control. It is a bizarre American perspective that serves only to highlight strategic ambiguities in the concept of "economic democracy." In this version, the ideal results are self-respect through shared capital ownership, without government intervention in the economy (beyond requiring corporations to be truly capitalist) or any modification of the concept of private property in the means of production. Problems of social relations within the enterprise are solved by the *feeling* of participation. Adler and Kelso insisted that workers, although part-owners, should not share in the governance of the enterprises, since they were not really qualified for that. (Their shares would not be voting shares.)

This outlook characterizes the kinds of "quality-of-work-life" schemes that progressive management types are encouraging in American industry today—all lacking the crucial element of democratic sovereignty. Constraints on the scope of participation are the interests of the enterprise as perceived by the managers; the ultimate source of authority remains private ownership. In a way, this matches the official psychology of Communist economies. There, the worker is also "an owner," but control of the enterprise and its work relations, as well as of the macrodecisions concerning production and investment, remain in the hands of managers who are not democratically chosen by the enterprise workers.[9]

The Idea of Workers' Control

WORKERS' CONTROL is an old idea, going back to Robert Owen and the early utopian socialists. The most eloquent description comes from the great philosopher of 19th-century liberalism, John Stuart Mill. In *The Principles of Political Economy*, Mill has a chapter on the "Probable Future of the Labouring Classes" in which he presents his ideal enterprise form, the workers' cooperative:

> The form of association, however, which if mankind continues to improve must be expected in the end to predominate, is not that which can exist between a capitalist as chief, and workpeople without a voice in the management, but the association of the labourers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on their operations, and working under managers elected and removable by themselves.

Mill imagined the good effects of participation, even with private ownership, in terms that are still used by advocates of genuine workers' control. Productivity would increase because of

> . . . the vast stimulus given to productive energies, by placing the labourers, as a mass, in a relation to their work which would make it their principle and their interest—at present it is neither—to do the utmost, instead of the least possible, in exchange for their remuneration.

As the educational level of the working class

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[8] A brief account of the ESOP, as a possible tool to gain worker control, is Daniel Swerdling, "Employee Ownership: How Well Is It Working?" *Working Papers for a New Society*, May–June 1979.

[9] The psychology of workplace alienation in a "people's democracy" is captured in Milos Haraszti's *A Worker in a Worker's State* (New York: Universe Books, 1981), a poet's account of life in a Hungarian tractor factory. The literature of alienation under capitalist work relations is massive. Studs Terkel's *Working* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974) is the most accessible work in this genre.

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rose, the most able workers would find it intolerable to be treated in the usual authoritarian manner and would demand a work situation that acknowledged their autonomy. So they would form producer cooperatives, trading off some of the efficiencies of the authoritarian form of organization for the creativity and commitment of cooperative production. Mill foresaw a time when even private capitalists would be moved to support worker participation:

> . . . both private capitalists and associations will gradually find it necessary to make the entire body of labourers participants in profits. Eventually, and in perhaps a less remote future than may be supposed, we may, through the cooperative principle, see our way to a change in society, which would combine the freedom and independence of the individual, with the moral, intellectual, and economical advantages of aggregate production; and which, without violence or spoliation, or even any sudden disturbance of existing habits and expectations, would realize, at least in the industrial management department, the best aspiration of the democratic spirit. . . .

Some years ago in *Dissent*, Michael Walzer constructed an argument-by-fable to show that democracy requires the shift of ultimate decision-making authority to the workers of the enterprise. Pluralism might justify some forms of private ownership; but for economic enterprises control belongs on moral grounds to the workers, the "citizens" of the institution. Walzer proposed this notion of economic democracy as the most effective argument for the socialist vision.

The fable describes the founding of a town and an economic enterprise by the same person. Walzer parallels the process by which the townspeople claim democratic sovereignty over political affairs—a plausible claim even in capitalist countries—with a process through which the workers come to claim sovereignty over the economic enterprise.[10] In brief, the political argument is that founding a town cannot give the founder a right to deny political sovereignty to the citizens, for these rights are independent of property ownership in the town. This basic claim is then extended to the economic enterprise. Economic enterprises are essentially public, like the town; and democracy is the proper basis for justifying claims to authority within "public things." For Walzer, the claim of the founder-owner of the enterprise is defeated by the more potent democratic rights of citizens to participate in decisions that affect their lives in fundamental ways. "What affects all must be decided by all" is the venerable maxim that Walzer quotes to express the democratic spirit of socialism.

The argument seems to be a general one; but once the scale, scope, and purposes of enterprises are taken into account, the generality becomes questionable. There is a wide range of "publicness" that can be ascribed to enterprises, and the applicability of the democratic argument for control and justification of authority seems to vary in a way that doesn't apply to the political realm. Walzer recognizes this, and he writes in a footnote: "The political rights of individuals are relative to the character of the activities in which they voluntarily engage. But this principle needs to be worked out in detail."

Working out this suggestion in detail can help clarify what sorts of democratic participation are appropriate to what sorts of enterprises and kinds of decisions. In most discussions of economic democracy, small enterprises (say, a master woodworker with some apprentices) do not seem to require democratic structure. On this scale, it would be easy for people who want democratically run cooperatives to establish

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[10] Walzer's "Town Meetings and Workers' Councils: A Story for Socialists" (*Dissent*, Summer 1978), is reprinted in Michael Walzer, *Radical Principles: Reflections of an Unreconstructed Democrat* (Basic Books, 1980). The basic political point is not plausible to everyone. A strict libertarian, like Robert Nozick, in arguing against the notion that "what affects all should be decided by all" states clearly, ". . . if someone starts a private 'town' on land whose acquisition did not and does not violate the Lockean proviso, persons who chose to move there or later to remain there would not have a *right* to a say in how the town was run, unless it was granted them by the decision procedures for the 'town' which the owner had established" (*Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Basic Books, 1974). The absolute rights of private property, which are the basis for this sort of libertarianism (a basis which one either finds intuitive or not—no moral argument is offered for these absolute rights) are unaffected by any considerations of the sort cited by socialists like Walzer or even liberal utilitarians. For a good brief criticism of Nozick's book, see Thomas Nagel, "Libertarianism Without Foundations," *Yale Law Journal* 85, November 1975.

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them. "External effects" are largely absent; these enterprises don't have extensive societal impact. Each enterprise can make decisions about its affairs without worrying about the larger community, very much as the ideal conception of the market would have it. On the other extreme, there are such organizations as the militia or the fire department, performing inherently public functions, with job tasks and "products" that are functionally determined. Internal work relations could easily have democratic components, but workers in such organizations don't have democratic rights to decide on alternative uses for the equipment or alternative purposes for the institution.

THE ENTERPRISES Walzer has in mind are the factories and foundries, the mines and mills that make up the productive core of the economy. We might claim that, beyond a certain size, economic enterprises are "public things," communities whose citizens are the workers of the enterprise. In these cases, to be bound justly to the authority that regulates work relations and basic investment decisions, the employees must be democratic participants in the governance of the enterprise. The claim of democracy will override the traditional rights of private ownership, though such rights will not be abolished entirely.

Certain distinctions need emphasis. For both private owners and producer cooperatives there is the "external effects" issue. In Walzer's fable, the company and the town are inextricably tied. The external effects are almost total; the economic enterprise is the material base of the community's existence. The citizenry of the town and the citizenry of the enterprise are essentially the same. Walzer's argument is that the entrepreneur-owner couldn't maintain his claim to control of either the company or the town. (He could expect monetary recompense for the public takeover of his economic enterprise, but only appreciation, thanks, and a plaque for his political entrepreneurship.)

But what about a corporation like IBM? Thousands of people work for IBM at a number of sites here and abroad. There are research scientists, computer designers and programmers, production workers, clerks, janitors, middle managers, and so on. The capital assets are immense, and the importance of the enterprise to the economic performance of the American economy is considerable. IBM is certainly a "public thing," in Walzer's sense. But who is the "public"? The enterprise is a national resource, vital to any effective planning of the economy, a key element in the country's long-term economic health. The same argument against private control by the founder-owner or by the current corporate owners works, I believe, against private control by a community of employees. The authority for major decisions of the enterprise should rest in the *larger* public, the democratic polity. This argument would apply equally to managers appointed by private owners or elected by the employees. From a public view, both of these are private.

The worker community of a potent enterprise like IBM or U.S. Steel or Exxon or ITT differs importantly from the citizenry of a community. (There are similarities too, as socialists point out when they rebut the capitalist claim that people who accept employment acknowledge at the same time that they have no rights in the enterprise.) Jobs provide the livelihoods of the employees, and the social conditions of a major part of their waking lives. There are good arguments for a right to some form of participation, as well as to the kinds of representation and consultation that have been achieved by the more advanced European labor movements in recent years. But the ultimate control of enterprises of significant public scope would seem as inappropriately assigned to the voting "mini-public" of the employees as to the scions of the founder-owner.

The issue of what rights workers can claim in "their" large public enterprise is complex. No single formulation would apply to all work situations. One important way an enterprise and a community differ, as Walzer notes, is that an enterprise has goals of production and sale of products or services. This economic function creates a crucial issue of responsibility and liability. Walzer's fable illustrates the complexity of the responsibility and risk aspect of ownership and control.

The entrepreneur started the enterprise, with his ideas, skills, time, and capital. Even at

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the earliest and riskiest period of the project, when there was no profit and no assurance of success, the decisions of the owner-manager clearly "affected all." But the logic of the situation doesn't support the argument that these decisions should be made by all. The workers have a right to their pay, whether or not the enterprise eventually succeeds. True enough, if the project doesn't pan out, the workers will be out of their jobs; but they will not have risked their time and capital. The entrepreneur-owner would take the loss. Walzer's argument for democratic control of the enterprises seems to apply only at a point considerably later than its establishment, when questions of risk and responsibility are effectively settled.[11]

This situation does not have a political analogy. As soon as there is a political community, the principle of democratic consent applies. The asymmetry suggests the importance of social and economic innovation. There is a place for individual actions in the economic realm—actions whose authority is not founded on the consent of the people who may be affected, even directly affected, by them. There does not seem to be such conceptual space within the political realm.

Many people prefer not to be managers or entrepreneurs. They don't want the risk or the responsibility, the office or the power. They value ways of life not easily compatible with management roles. This could apply even to shared management, as in a democratically run cooperative. For many people who feel this way, this is not an "escape from freedom," as the analogous refusal to accept democratic participation in the political realm might be. Many people say that all they want is a secure job that is interesting, with good personal relations in the workplace, respect from managers, decent pay, a chance for advancement. Others express a desire for participation in the planning of their immediate work environment. But even they may not want to participate in large-scale management concerns. This attitude is especially relevant to the giant productive enterprises that form the commanding heights of the economy and are the obvious candidates for public control.

ALL OF THIS suggests that the right to democratic participation in management is not always a right inherent in the role of the worker, the way political participation is inherent in citizenship.

People do want, of course, to be treated with respect: they do want their autonomy and dignity acknowledged. But this consideration applies to all social forms, even when democracy and participation are not normally at issue, as in athletic teams, classrooms, monasteries, or military units. If there were non-constitutional means of achieving respect and dignity, as there are, occasionally, even in private enterprises, then the pressure to universalize the principle of workers' control would be lessened, and it would be easier to take a more nuanced view. In capitalist economies, the power of ownership and the drive for profits (in Communist economies it would be production quotas) so largely determine workplace relations that it does seem plausible that only by transferring control to the workers could workplace relations be systematically and securely transformed.

Who then would control IBM? The IBM employees? Should they be able to decide democratically to distribute the profits to themselves, while curtailing investment and expansion? Many people on the left would say quite firmly that no individual or family should own or control great oil deposits or billion-dollar steel mills. Why then should the relatively small number of workers and technicians that are the employees of Union Oil or Bethlehem Steel own or control these resources? Such examples suggest that ownership and effective control issues need to be clarified before the status and variety of democratic participation rights are settled.

Some forms of participation ought to be an

[11] In theory, where there is a market sector, a business enterprise should never be risk-free. In fact, there is an unrealistic glorification of the entrepreneur in our culture. Often in big business circles, financing institutions like banks, the use of defense contracting relations, government subsidies and other factors assure that the business will not be allowed to fail; or if there is failure, the losses are "socialized" while the so-called entrepreneur ends up making a bundle. See John McDermott's "The Entrepreneur's New Clothes, the *Nation*, November 12, 1983.

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aspect of all jobs. The grounds for such a claim are the right to autonomy and respect for persons—moral claims that do not necessarily raise issues of democratic decision-making. Rights of workers could be described in a labor code applicable to all enterprises, public and private. Equal participation in the management of the enterprise is not a universal right, even in principle. Different work situations have different sources of appeal and different drawbacks. For some jobs, democratic participation in management would be a powerful appeal. In other situations, there would be other aspects of the work that would compensate for the absence of participation opportunities (for example, apprenticeship with a master craftsman). For some people, not having to participate would be a real plus. As Michael Walzer put it in his fine essay "A Day in the Life of a Socialist Citizen," political participation might take up too many evenings. The same might be true of the working day.[12]

It is not only a question, as Walzer suggests, of the variety of forms democratic participation within enterprises might take, analogous to the various forms of political democracy. In the political realm, the variation of form cannot violate the universal right of democratic citizenship. But for economic enterprises, it isn't only the form that should vary. Even the question whether a particular enterprise or institution should be governed according to democratic principles will be variously answered.

This situation reflects the important difference between justification of authority in the political realm and justification within the economy. We are all democrats politically; only democratic consent and participation can justify political authority. But justification within the wide variety of economic enterprises is a more complex issue. Democratic consent and equal participation are not the only moral bases for authority.

To put it another way: simply transferring property rights, control of capital and work relations, to the workers is not the only way or always the right way of extending the principle of democratic legitimacy to the economy. There is no simple model that can adequately answer the simultaneous and often contending claims made for democracy and for other valued social goals. "Economic democracy" is only part of the answer to questions of mixing public and private authority and establishing humane work situations.

THESE REFLECTIONS on Walzer's appealing vision of enterprise democracy lead me to emphasize the primacy of the traditional socialist idea of democratic political control over the commanding heights of the economy. (And this is only a step, as the troubles of Mitterrand's administration in France demonstrate. The embedding of economies in international systems means that "control of the commanding heights" should be said with some sense of modesty.)

Workers' control and community control are both democratic ideals; but they are not the *same* ideals. And in a pluralist, "feasible" socialism there will be room for private initiative and risk where neither workers' control nor community control will dominate. Clarity of ideals and arguments can serve as a real force in the growth of a democratic socialist movement. □

[12] Walzer has recently extended his reflections on industrial democracy as an ideal. In *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (Basic Books, 1983), Walzer retells his fable as an actual case study of the Pullman Company and the town of Pullman, Illinois. He also addresses more fully the issue of who is appropriate for which decisions in enterprises and between enterprises. But the question is *which form of democracy* applies within enterprises, not the issue of whether all enterprises are required to be fully democratic.

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Michael Walzer

Commitment & Social Criticism: Camus's Algerian War

For men and women of the democratic left, Albert Camus is an exemplary figure. His writing and his life, both of them enhanced, perhaps, by his early and senseless death, have taken on mythic proportions, so that we can plausibly feel that we know him well even without knowing much about him. We know what he stood for: he was a man of principle, a "just man." (We also know, because of Herbert Lottman's biography, what he did every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; oddly, that doesn't dispel the myth, any more than it reveals the inner man.) But there is one moment in his life when Camus is commonly said to have betrayed his principles—an all-important and long-drawn-out moment, dominating the last years of his life: the moment of the Algerian War. Here he became "that just man without justice," described by Simone de Beauvoir in her memoirs; austere urgency collapsing, says Conor Cruise O'Brien, into hollow rhetoric. From 1954 on, he provides an example only of the inability of the "moderate bourgeoisie" of France to come to grips with the brutality of colonialism. Even this failure serves, in a way, to sustain the myth: it makes Camus into a disfigured hero, human, all-too-human. But how exactly did he fail?

I want to reconsider Camus's Algerian moment, to defend him against his critics, and at the same time to free him from the bonds of myth. I don't think that Camus was a hero in the 1950s—he may have been a hero in the '40s—and I don't much like the phrase "just man," which suggests a moral absolutism that he explicitly repudiated. More accurate to say that he was a good man; in a bad time he did better than most of his fellows. He was also a working intellectual, a radical critic, who faced the hardest choices and who flinched sometimes but didn't walk away. We can learn from his experience something about the practice of criticism, its obligations and limits.

II

Man of letters and *moraliste*, Camus represents an old French tradition. It is an honorable tradition but not without its temptations, the greatest of which is the Godlike pronouncement. Like everyone else, Camus sometimes succumbed, but he was programmatically committed to resist. If we stand sufficiently apart, indeed, we can see the moral world much as God must see the physical world. "There is no more nature," Camus wrote in his notebook after a plane flight from Paris to Algiers; "the deep gorge, true relief, the impassable mountain stream, everything disappears. There remains *a diagram*—a map. Man, in short, looks through the eyes of God. And he perceives then that God can have but an abstract view. This is not a good thing." It is no better in ethical life than in geography.

As true relief requires contact and closeness, so true morality requires involvement and love. And yet love fits uneasily into a general moral theory, for it always favors the near and the few. "Love is injustice," Camus wrote, "but justice is not enough." This tension is one of the reiterated themes of the *Notebooks* during the years of Camus's "second cycle," when he was writing *The Plague, The Just Assassins,* and *The Rebel.* He attempted different formulations, always maintaining an antinomy that he might better have avoided by saying simply that a justice without room for love would itself

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be unjust. I think that is what he believed; it is what his critics commonly deny.

Camus's response to the Algerian War has been criticized in two different ways. He has been blamed first for a failure of concreteness, for the very abstraction he hated: a rigid universalism. High-mindedly, it is said, he applies the same standards to oppressors and oppressed alike, without regard to their actual circumstances. And he has been blamed, second, for a failure of distance, for sentimentality and an unrestrained particularism. Low-mindedly, he defends his friends and relatives. But the two charges are really one. The fundamental criticism is that Camus's universalism is only a cover for his particularism; talk about justice masks a merely local love. "The humanist," Beauvoir wrote in her autobiography, "had given way to the *pied noir*."* Hence the hollowness of his rhetoric—the stylistic sign of bad faith.

Rereading *Actuelles* III, Camus's Algerian chronicle, it is hard to see the bad faith. Moral anxiety lies right on the surface of the reprinted articles and speeches; universalism and particularism, justice and love, are equally in evidence; nothing is concealed. These are essays in negotiation, the work of a social critic continually aware of the on-the-ground obstacles that the map of right and wrong only inadequately represents. His opponents are critics of a different sort; they maneuver by the moral (or the ideological) map. The two are distinguished not merely by their conclusions but by the way they set about their work, by the way they locate themselves among their fellows. Before taking a stand one must find a standpoint. Where? Too close, say Camus's opponents, and one becomes an apologist; too far, Camus responds, and one becomes a terrorist. The issue between them is critical distance.

An excerpt from Camus's *Notebooks,* 1942: "Calypso offers Ulysses a choice between immortality and the land of his birth. He rejects immortality. Therein lies perhaps the whole meaning of the *Odyssey.*" The common view of Camus is similar. He had to choose between eternal justice and French Algeria, and he rejected eternal justice. Maybe so; it is certainly true that he never rejected French Algeria. He was indeed a *pied noir*, born and raised in Algeria; he learned to write in Algeria, and he never wrote more lyrically than when he wrote about the sun and sea of his native land. "For Algeria . . . I have unbridled passion, and I surrender to the pleasure of loving." The only authentic example of Camusian nonsense is provided by his many pages (most of them written early on) about Mediterranean culture—an imaginary world of classical "measure" that neither Camus's own people nor the Arabs of Algeria ever gave any sign of inhabiting.

It can hardly be said, then, that Camus is an objective critic of French colonialism. One might well prefer someone from Japan or Iceland or, even better, someone from Mars, an impartial spectator or ideal observer for whom critical distance is not, so we might suppose, a problem. But such people are unlikely to take an interest in French colonialism. God is the ideal "ideal observer," and it is a commonplace of the philosophical tradition that He is chiefly interested in observing Himself. In any case, His omniscience is in the service of abstraction, and He is likely to miss the deep gorges and impassable mountain streams. What we really want is a social critic who emerges out of his own society. Someone who is inside, connected, emotionally close, must wrench himself loose and learn to say no. How to do that?

III

Writing in 1965, very much in the shadow of the Algerian War, Sartre argued that the only way to do it was through "perpetual self-criticism." The life of a social critic must begin with the rejection of his own socialization, the refusal of society-in-himself. He can't just deny that he is a petty-bourgeois intellectual, or a *pied noir,* or whatever, and leap into universality; he must acknowledge his conditioned self and then subject it to an unrelenting analysis and critique. It isn't entirely clear who the analyst is here and who the analysand. The same petty-bourgeois intellectual, the same

* *Pied noir* ("black foot"): in origin the mainland name for French settlers in Algeria, many of whom were poor farmers, imagined, like our hillbillies, as barefoot and dirty.

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pied noir, must function in both roles: a strenuous business, though not impossible. In practice, however, the analysis and criticism is more likely to be aimed at one's fellow intellectuals or *pieds noirs*—not oneself but the ones who look like oneself: the purpose is differentiation.

This can sometimes take slightly comic forms, as in Beauvoir's announcement, after the overwhelming popular vote endorsing de Gaulle's return to power in 1958, that she was no longer a member of the French people: "The result of the referendum had severed the last threads linking me to my country." Nothing in her life seems to have changed in the years afterward. Of course, the severing of threads had begun much earlier, and I suppose one can say that it began with self-criticism, though self-criticism of a very special sort: "I could no longer bear my fellow citizens. . . . I couldn't sit down near them anymore. . . . I felt as dispossessed as I had when the Occupation began. It was even worse, because, whether I wanted to be or not, I was an accomplice of these people. . . ." Or again: "All those people in the streets . . . they were all murderers. Myself as well. 'I'm French.' The words scalded my throat like an admission of hideous deformity." But it isn't *her own* deformity that Beauvoir is describing in these passages.

I don't mean to mock Simone de Beauvoir; her autobiography is wonderfully lively and openhearted. Though she is a very sophisticated writer, her politics and morality are artless—which Camus's never were. The shame she expresses over Algeria, and the pathology of shame that she also expresses, both find their echo on the American left during the Vietnam years. I only want to suggest that such feelings are not the precondition, they are the result, of social criticism. It's not that one severs the threads in order to become a critic, but that the force of one's criticism leads one to think about severing the threads. But criticism will falter and fail if the threads are really cut, for the social critic must have standing among his fellow citizens. He exploits his connections, as it were, not his disconnections. If he hates his fellows and breaks his ties, why should they pay attention to what he says?

That last is not only a prudential but also a moral point, and I want to develop it briefly before asking again how social criticism properly begins. The social critic, Sartre says, must escape his own conditioning. But he doesn't then enter into a world of universal principles. He must first "universalize" himself; he must join in a political practice that enacts the principles, a struggle for the principles, and so transform himself even as he transforms the world. More simply, he must consult the moral map and set out to cross the border that separates oppressor from oppressed. He must undertake, says Sartre, "a concrete and unconditioned alignment with . . . the underprivileged classes." This doesn't require going to live and work among the underprivileged. Like the schoolmaster Daru in Camus's fine short story "The Guest," one can do that without making anything like an unconditional commitment. What Sartre has in mind is a shift in political position, not social location. Still, it is a new life that the critic must create for himself, and the creation is hard.

How is he to live? Who are his comrades? He can never be assimilated on the other side of the border; he is tempted to "pass," making up in zeal what he lacks in familiarity and ease. Sartre hopes that the committed intellectual will "never renounce his critical faculties," but this is a matter of some difficulty, touch and go, for his critical faculties are the product of his social conditioning. Radically desocialized, he is a candidate for ideological discipline: hence the appeal of the Communist party. Sartre himself, Beauvoir too, avoided party discipline, though it can't be said that they gave their critical faculties free rein. It is to their credit, I suppose, that party hacks, whose alignment was really unconditional, always thought them to be petty-bourgeois intellectuals. In the case of the Algerian War, however, they made the more radical move recommended by the Sartrean program: guiltily, they separated themselves from the French people, and they supported the FLN, so far as I can see, without a word of criticism.

Of course, they did not go to Algiers and plant bombs in cafés and dance halls. They supported such actions from a distance. Despite the "severance" of their links with France, they remained at home, where they

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were resolute and sometimes courageous critics of their own government. Hence they fit the standard model of the social critic; they established their detachment and denounced the local barbarians (and condemned Camus for refusing to join their denunciations). But though much that they said was true, there was also much that they failed to say, and their failures were closely connected to the radical character of their "self-criticism." The distance that they established had its cost. A small cost, perhaps, if one conceives of human life in existentialist terms: the petty-bourgeois intellectual, aspiring to be the author of himself, invents himself as a social critic. It is a heroic project, and the result is a hero, standing apart from his fellows, bound to his critical principles. But then, like God, he can only take an abstract view.

Wrenched loose from bourgeois France, unable to become Algerians, Sartre and Beauvoir see an ideologically flattened world. The FLN represents liberation, the French are fascists. Political choices are extraordinarily easy, a function of critical distance. "The lives of Moslems were of no less importance in my eyes," writes Beauvoir, "than those of my fellow countrymen." There is little evidence that she attached much importance to any particular lives. Terrorist attacks on French civilians left her unconcerned; and she was outraged by Algerian deaths only when they were caused by the French (there were, no doubt, enough of those to provoke anyone's outrage). She knew about the brutality of the FLN's internal wars but chose not to write about it; she seems never to have given a thought to the likely fate of the *pied noir* community after an FLN victory. So her hard-won impartiality slides into a cold indifference. For all her passion, she writes without the complexity of love. Reading her account of her Algerian years, one feels the force of E. M. Forster's injunction: "Only connect!"

IV

Though he is said to have been cool and aloof in personal relations, Camus was a connected social critic. Moreover, he was connected in a way that tests the theory of critical distance—to a group that benefited, or that thought it benefited, from the oppression of others. In the Marxist scheme, a *pied noir* intellectual was exactly like a bourgeois intellectual: Camus belonged, wrote Albert Memmi in 1957, "to a minority that is historically in the wrong." Memmi, a Tunisian Jew whose people had also benefited from French colonialism, was not entirely unsympathetic. But the standard left argument is simple and straightforward: that kind of "belonging" must be repudiated. It turns out that the repudiation is easier in the case of class membership than in the case of nationality, for the nation is commonly the deeper tie (and kinship networks often extend, as Camus's did, across class lines, though not across national lines).

Camus, born among the poor, had no difficulty criticizing the wealthy elite of the *pied noir* community. It was much harder for him to take Memmi's view and describe the entire community as somehow "in the wrong." No more could he accept Frantz Fanon's description, which underlies and rationalizes the terrorism of the FLN: "The Frenchman in Algeria cannot be neutral or innocent. Every Frenchman . . . oppresses, despises, dominates." In this view, social criticism from within is literally impossible; the *pied noir* intellectual must make himself over—first into a detached observer, and then into a supporter of Algerian liberation. But the historicism and collectivism of these arguments are further examples of abstract morality. They miss the texture of moral life.

In 1939, the young Camus visited the Kabyle Mountains, and wrote (for a socialist newspaper in Algiers) a series of articles on the suffering of the Berbers and the indifference of the colonial regime. The articles, the most important of which are reprinted in *Actuelles* III, constitute a powerful piece of social criticism, and they led, a year later, to Camus's "exile" from Algeria. His "cry of indignation," Jules Roy later wrote, made him "suspect in the eyes of the authorities." But though the articles required a physical journey that few *pied noir* journalists undertook, they did not require that Camus stop being a *pied noir* journalist. Independence was necessary, perhaps courage, but not the repudiation of national identity: he simply applied the standards of the French left—the putative standards,

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indeed, of the colonial regime—to the case of Kabylia. He called for a redistribution of land, technical assistance on a large scale, local self-government, equal rights for all the inhabitants of Algeria. He did not call for an end to French rule, but his program was very close to that of the Algerian nationalists of the '30s, who were themselves Francophile, their faces turned toward Paris, their politics revolutionary only in the sense of 1789. These Algerians were aliens-at-home, living in a colonial limbo, and they would become effective nationalists only when they reinvented their politics in an Algerian (Islamic, Arab) context. But Camus was not an alien, even though he would soon leave his homeland.

The social critic works from principles naturalized in his own society. He applies those principles with a stringency that makes his fellow citizens uncomfortable: hence he often finds himself alone. "*Le vrai intellectuel*," as Julien Benda wrote, "*est un solitaire.*" But he doesn't begin by cutting himself off; nor need he embrace and cultivate his solitude. He has his own obligations and loyalties. Camus's description of the intellectual is better: *solitaire et solidaire*, apart and united. "After all," he wrote mockingly of the ancient argument about rootedness and nomadism, "we need a native soil and we need travel."

Even "true intellectuals" have parents, friends, familiar places, warm memories. Perfect solitude, like existential heroism, is a romantic idea, and it is closely connected to another romantic idea: the absolute opposition between art, philosophy, and moral value, on the one hand, and ordinary life, mundane concern, "bourgeois society," on the other. As if the critic plucked his principles from the sky! In bad times, it is precisely the principles of ordinary life that need to be asserted. "The values I ought to defend and illustrate today," Camus wrote in his notebook in October 1946, "are average values. This requires a talent so spare and unadorned that I doubt I have it."

Camus's prose is sometimes too elevated, too "noble," to capture average values, but he had another and a more pressing problem. The values he wanted to defend were shared only formally, in practice rejected, by the greater number of his own people. The rejection was visible as early as 1945, at the time of the Sétif rising and the savage French repression, and it was a permanent presence in Camus's life from 1954 on. After Sétif, he returned to Algeria and wrote for *Combat* a second series of articles denouncing the repression and calling again for absolute equality: France must demonstrate its commitment "to export to Algeria the democratic regime that [its own citizens] enjoy." "Nothing French will be saved in North Africa . . . unless justice is saved." But the export of democracy was pressed only half-heartedly from Paris and vehemently opposed by *pied noir* spokesmen. What then did justice require?

In the case of the other North African colonies, Morocco and Tunisia, the argument was easy. As soon as there were serious and organized demands for independence, independence had to be granted. That was the meaning, and the inevitable result, of exporting democracy—even if the export was effective only for that one moment when the people of the two colonies voted for freedom and simultaneously submitted themselves to new masters. But the case was different in Algeria where over a million Frenchmen had settled. In effect, there were two nations in Algeria, and it was not clear that they could both be free. From the beginning of its revolt, in 1954, the FLN demanded independence and full sovereignty. Camus, in all his writings, resisted this demand, for he understood that independence under FLN leadership meant the destruction of the *pied noir* community.

Sometimes he expressed his resistance in terms of the simple antinomy of justice and love that I have cited from the *Notebooks*. His most famous statement on Algeria had exactly this form: "I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother before justice." He said this to a group of students in Stockholm in 1957, when he received the Nobel Prize, and some of his friends have treated it as an offhand remark, a passionate but unreflective outburst. He repeated it later on, it is said, only because of the stir it created and the attacks from opponents on the left—who wrote as if they didn't have mothers or wouldn't think of defending them. But that remark, like all of Camus's Algerian arguments, is prefigured in the *Notebooks*, and

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its repetition is of a piece with the Preface to *Actuelles* III. One might well ask, however, whether a solution to the problems of Algeria that ignored Camus's mother, or the interests of the *pied noir* community generally, could possibly be just. Men and women don't lose their rights even if they are "historically in the wrong."

Certainly, when he canvassed the possible alternatives to independence, Camus was in search of justice, looking for an outcome that would respect the identity, the interests, the political aspirations of the two Algerian nations. "The 'French fact' cannot be eliminated in Algeria, and the dream of a sudden disappearance of France is childish. But there is no reason either why 9 million Arabs should live on their land like forgotten men; the dream that the Arab masses can be canceled out, silenced and subjugated, is just as mad."

After 1954, these two forms of madness were at war with one another, and it was Camus's proposals for equality and federation that looked increasingly dreamlike. Madness was practical, moral sanity utopian. The terrorist campaign against civilians signaled the FLN's commitment to the elimination of the "French fact," and the use of torture signaled the French commitment to "silence and subjugate" the Arabs. There was no choice, many French leftists argued, but to choose the least mad, the most just, of these alternatives. And when he refused to choose Camus was charged with the crime he finally embraced—the crime of love, expressed now in terms of brothers rather than mothers: " . . . if anyone still thinks heroically that one's brother must die rather than one's principles, I shall go no further than to admire him from a distance. I am not of his stamp."

He refused to cut himself loose and establish critical distance. Living in France, he still wrote about Algeria from close up. "He remained in fact a Frenchman of Algeria," writes O'Brien, and as time went on he came increasingly "to take the side of his own tribe against the abstract entities." He distanced himself not from his local setting and particular interests, but from the universal values "that had hitherto dominated his language." Camus's lines about his mother and his brother lend support to this view, but I think that it is, as I have indicated but not yet argued, fundamentally misconceived. From the beginning to the end, Camus displayed the same commitment to particularity; he was always drawn to the projections and gradations of "true relief." And his universalism was similarly consistent, though it took a shape that O'Brien did not recognize: it was constructed out of repeated particularities; it worked by reiteration, not by abstraction.

Camus would not have said, for example, that French and Arab lives were of equal importance in his eyes. French lives, even *pied noir* lives, on the wrong side of history, meant more to him—just as Arab lives meant more to the intellectuals of the FLN (though this latter point, it has to be said, was not always apparent: Camus was committed to a people, the FLN intellectuals to a cause). Morality required the mutual acceptance, not the abolition or transcendence, of these different meanings. The French had their own loyalties, and so did the Arabs; and each had a right to his own. Similarly, Camus's first commitment was to self-determination for the *pied noir* community, but he understood that the first commitment of the Arabs was to their own self-determination. The two commitments were equally legitimate, and the conflict between them could not be resolved by abstract reasoning (or by counting heads). Detach oneself, step back, step farther back; still justice did not come into view. It was necessary to negotiate the differences. All Camus's schemes had this purpose: to find a formula sufficiently plausible to guide the negotiations. He never succeeded in doing this—"these reports," he wrote in the Preface to *Actuelles* III, "are . . . the record of a failure"—but that is not to say that he was wrong to try.

The attempt was especially urgent because what was at stake was the very existence of the *pied noir* community. This did not lead Camus, as long as he continued to write about Algeria, to temper his criticism of French policies, but it did make it impossible for him to line up, as Sartre and Beauvoir did, with the enemies of the French. Nor was he willing to sign manifestos along with French supporters of the FLN. "It seemed to me both indecent and harmful to

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protest against tortures in the company of those who readily accepted . . . the mutilation of European children." But there was also a more general point here. In his *Notebooks*, in late 1947 or early '48, Camus had copied out the exclamation of a Russian émigré of the 19th century: "What a delight to hate one's native land and to long for its collapse." His comment: "The intelligentsia and the *totalitarian* interpretation of the world." He returned to the same theme in his 1958 Preface: "We could have used moralists less joyfully resigned to their country's misfortunes. . . . " Like Rousseau, Camus had no use for philosophers who loved humanity and disdained the men and women among whom they lived. Philosophers of that sort were dangerous.

He shaped his politics out of his primary loyalties.

> When one's own family is in immediate danger of death, one may want to instill in one's family a feeling of greater generosity and fairness . . . but (let there be no doubt about it!) one still feels a natural solidarity with the family in such mortal danger and hopes that it will survive at least and, by surviving, have a chance to show its fairness.

And at this point he explicitly denied the antinomy of love and justice, tribe and universe: "If that is not honor and *true justice*, then I know nothing that is of any use in this world." True justice must include his own people, though not on their own terms. The terms must be negotiated, but clearly the French will have to accept a radical redistribution of land, wealth, and power; they will have to give up the false universalism of "Frenchness"—"the perennial lie of constantly proposed but never realized assimilation"—and acknowledge Arab particularity. As early as 1945, in his *Combat* articles, Camus had recognized that the great majority of Arabs did not want to become French citizens: there was an Arab nation ("*je voudrais rappeler aussi que le peuple arabe existe*"). There was also a French nation. The two would have to coexist, and the coexistence would require complicated arrangements of a sort incompatible with the currently favored principles of political life: state sovereignty and legal uniformity.

It is curious that Camus never considered the partition of Algeria, the only solution that was compatible with those principles and with the self-determination of the two communities—compatible also with Camus's assertion (in 1958) that "the way to human society passes through national society." The pattern of French settlement probably made partition seem even more difficult than co-existence within a federated state. I suspect that Camus had another reason for supporting federation: he saw it as a particular instance of the pluralism to which he was increasingly drawn. "Here as in every domain, I believe only in differences and not in uniformity. . . . " Nor was this, in his view, merely the creed of a threatened minority; it was what justice (liberty too) required.

V

After 1958, Camus wrote no more about Algeria. In the last two years of his life, years of rising opposition to the war among the French in France and increasing fanaticism among the French in Algeria, he was silent. He has been much blamed for his silence, and perhaps the blame is justified: what is the use, after all, of a silent intellectual? But it might be said that Camus's silence was eloquent in its hopelessness. Every day it became more apparent that there was no chance of preserving, or of reforming and renewing, the Algeria of his youth. He could not join Sartre and Beauvoir in supporting the FLN; nor could he support the *pied noir* ultras, committed now, to the point of no return, to policies he had opposed all his life. De Gaulle maneuvered between the two, but that was, however necessary, a politician's, not an intellectual's task. In effect, says O'Brien, Camus supported the government's policies, at least up to the point at which de Gaulle made his deal with the FLN; but by that time Camus was dead. He did not live to see the final spasm of OAS violence, after which it was morally impossible for the *pieds noirs* to remain in Algeria. The FLN victory would have made it impossible in practice anyway, as he foresaw. Should he have broken his silence and told his people that the struggle was over, that they had to leave? Maybe so, though there is also something to be said for Camus's claim "that too much is expected of a writer in such matters."

In 1961, a year after Camus's death, his

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friend Jules Roy, another *pied noir* writer, published a powerful indictment of the French war. The last chapter, calling for immediate negotiations with the FLN, is a tense and passionate argument with Camus. Roy shares his friend's commitment to the reiteration of justice: for the Arabs, and for the French too. "I want to render justice on one side without stripping it from the other. But I respect an order of precedence: I move first to the injustice that cries out in pain, since the other for the moment constitutes only a hypothesis."

The war is a catastrophe in progress; the exile of the *pied noir* community is a catastrophe "that has not happened." It is clear from Roy's book that he doesn't believe it will happen; he lacked Camus's political realism. But his sense of precedence was almost certainly right—especially after the bloody (and as it turned out pointless) "pacification" campaigns of de Gaulle's first years in power. Camus's argument against the use of torture during the Battle of Algiers applies also to the brutalities of pacification: "Even those who are fed up with morality ought to realize that it is better to suffer certain injustices than to commit them even to win wars . . . such fine deeds inevitably lead to the demoralization of France and the loss of Algeria."

The fine deeds did lead to demoralization and loss, and perhaps Camus, had he lived, would have joined Jules Roy in calling for negotiations with the FLN and, in effect, acknowledging the loss of Algeria. "As for your choice," says Roy to his dead friend, "I cannot doubt that it would have been like my own, at the cost of what anguish!" At least, Camus would have known that something had been lost. He could not have written about the outcome of the war in O'Brien's casual tone: "Politically, Camus and his tribe . . . were casualties of the post-war period." They were also victims of an absolutist politics with which we should not make our peace.

VI

Camus's anti-absolutist politics depends not on critical distance but on what we might call critical connection. And so it invites us to doubt the standard view of the social critic as someone who breaks loose from his particular loyalties and views his own society from the outside—from an ideal point, as it were, equidistant from all societies. If he sides with the oppressed, he does so because he sees their parties and movements as embodying universal principles. Particular men and women he does not see at all. He is like a judge, an activist judge, perhaps, whose judgments are resolutely impersonal. This is a role that Camus explicitly rejected, telling an interviewer in 1953 that his own choice, if he could choose, "would at least be never to sit on a judge's bench . . . like so many of our philosophers." He would commit himself instead to "the common existence of history and of men, everyday life with the most possible light thrown upon it, the dogged struggle against one's own degradation and that of others."

The order of that last phrase is important. First comes the struggle against one's own degradation and then, by extension, "that of others." Camus is as much a man of honor as a man of principle, and honor begins with personal loyalty, not with ideological commitment. Hence his Algerian politics, which can best be understood as a long, ultimately a failed, struggle against the degradation of the *pied noir* community. The threat came from within as much as from without: that is why he condemned French racism long before FLN terrorism. It's probably fair to say that he hated racism more for what it did to the French than for what it did to the Arabs, but he would have accepted the reversal of that priority in the writing of an Arab intellectual.

What Camus could not accept was the claim that the *pieds noirs* were already degraded, condemned beyond redemption by their colonial history. That is indeed a view determined by distance, but it doesn't provide a ground for social criticism; it makes social criticism superfluous. On that view, as on Fanon's, there is nothing to do but abandon ship. But Camus conceived of the critic as one of the crew, who can't leave before the passengers. "The task of men of culture and faith . . . is not to desert historical struggles. . . . It is rather to remain what they are . . . to favor freedom against the fatalities that close in upon it."

So Camus remained *what he was*: a *pied noir* writer. Of course, he often found himself

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standing at some distance from his fellow *pieds noirs*. When he came to Algiers in 1956 to appeal for a "civilian truce," French thugs surrounded the hall in which he was speaking and shouted for his death—while Fanon, inside the hall, was bitterly critical of Camus's "sweet sister" speech. At that moment, and in the years after, Camus occupied a kind of no-man's-land. But his homelessness was not self-made; he had set out from inhabited territory, and he longed to reach inhabited territory again. He was *solitaire et solidaire*.

The standard view of critical distance rests on a homely analogy: we are more ready to find fault with other people than with ourselves. If we are to be properly critical, then, we must turn our own people into "the others." We must look at them as if they were total strangers; or we must make ourselves into strangers to them. The trouble with the analogy is that such easy fault-finding is never very effective. It can be brutal enough, but it doesn't touch the conscience of the people to whom it is addressed. The task of the social critic is precisely to touch the conscience. Hence heretics, prophets, insurgent intellectuals, rebels—Camus's kind of rebels—are insiders all: they know the texts and the tender places of their own culture. Criticism is a more intimate activity than the standard view allows. And because it is intimate, it is sometimes reduced to silence, as impersonal judgment never is.

Intimate criticism is a common feature of our private lives; it has its own (implicit) rules. We don't criticize our children, for example, in front of other people, but only when we are alone with them. The social critic has the same impulse, especially when his own people are confronted by hostile forces. "Constantly present in Camus's mind," writes a relatively friendly critic, "was the thought that his mother, his brother, and his friends might be exposed to increased terrorism by words which he could utter without the slightest personal danger to himself."

And yet the social critic can never be alone with his people; his intimacy can't take the form of private speech; it can only shape and control his public speech. A certain forbearance qualifies or alternates with his stringency. But he must speak, and speak out loud, so long as there is hope that he will be listened to among his own people. The detached and disinterested moralist goes on and on, and we don't care. But the silence of the connected social critic is a grim sign—a sign of defeat, a sign of endings. Though he may not be wrong to be silent, we long to hear his voice. □

"Human Rights" in Paraguay

Maria Margarita Baez de Britez is the widow of a Paraguayan peasant killed by police in 1980. Her husband was one of a group evicted from their land by the government. The group reportedly hijacked a bus and demanded to be taken to the capital city of Asunción, where they hoped to draw attention to land tenure disputes and to poverty. Several children in the region had recently died from malnutrition.

According to the police report, the peasants died in a shootout. No death certificates were issued, and no bodies were returned to the families. Burial reportedly took place in a secret mass grave. Men in civilian clothes abducted Maria Baez in early 1982 and took her, hooded and gagged, to police headquarters. She was held there for more than two months.

During her detention, she was tied to the grill of a barred window and left hanging by a rope attached to the handcuffs on her wrists. "I was kept like this for six days without food or sleep," she said. "They constantly threw icy water over me."

While blindfolded, she was burned and beaten. Later she was tied in a foetal position and given a spinal injection that appeared to be a drug. Physical and psychological torture continued as interrogators pressed her to sign a document of "personal testimony."

Authorities then transferred her to a prison and subsequently brought her before a judge to make preliminary statements. Amid the anguish and uncertainty she described, Maria Baez asked, "What is my crime?". . . .

Amnesty International has received persistent reports that Paraguayan authorities force political detainees to sign statements without informing them of the contents. Many prisoners subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment have "confessed" to offenses they have not committed. Subsequent retractions of these statements and confessions, to Amnesty's knowledge, have not resulted in investigations of alleged torture. Harassment of defense lawyers also obstructs due process.

— From *Amnesty Action*, February–March, 1984 □

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Martin Kilson

What Is Africa to Me?

Dilemmas of Transnational Ethnicity

When President Carter appointed Andrew Young ambassador to the United Nations, a new era began. For the first time in this century, a key figure in the foreign-policy establishment was Afro-American, with his writ extending especially to African affairs. Young's appointment enabled blacks, for the first time, to feel capable of tilting American power in behalf of Africa's quest for development.

Though such policy leverage is new, the African-related concerns are not. They were preceded by earlier attempts by Afro-Americans to convert their ethnicity into an international or transnational force for African advancement.

Ever since the 19th century, numerous efforts have been made by Afro-Americans to forge a positive ethnic awareness and, through this, to generate transnational influence in favor of the African peoples. These attempts were galvanized by innumerable repressive and traumatic experiences—the bondage of blacks in the plantation South, the violent restrictions upon Afro-American citizenship following the failure of Reconstruction, the neurotic cultural negation of blacks by white Americans, and the quest by five generations of black Americans for a cultural identity equal to those of white ethnic groups.

Efforts to globalize ethnic ties persist throughout the 20th century, gaining in force and frequency in the years after the Second World War. Among Afro-Americans, different religious, cultural, ideological, and political strategies have competed for primacy. Some, for example, favor Islamic religious patterns as the best means of deepening ties with Africa's peoples. Others prefer staying within the Christian missionary tradition, which the Afro-American middle-class churches have used to extend black ethnicity for nearly a century (for instance, the African Methodist Episcopal and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches).

In the ideological and political spheres, there has been a plethora of competing groups concerned with the international extension of black ethnicity—some believing in Marxist anti-imperialist strategies, others in something nearer to a capitalist strategy, and some believing that Afro-Americans, with the black world as a whole, should fashion international linkages exclusively panblack and thus antiwhite.

Contradictions associated with globalizing black American ethnicity are as numerous as the competing strategies. The primary contradiction is that while most Afro-Americans expect Africans to be spontaneously receptive to cultural-political ties with black societies in the Diaspora, such receptivity has in fact been problematic. Moreover, whenever linkages between Afro-Americans and Africans do evolve they seem peculiarly fitful. Why?

II

For peoples of African descent living in the Diaspora, the sources of their ethnicity are extrinsic and defensive in character, stemming from several centuries of territorial separation from Africa under the political-cultural hegemony of the white Christian civilization. Hence the ethnicity of a Diaspora society, such as Afro-America, is described by the culturally ambiguous term "blackness." Afro-Americans (and by extension other blacks in the Diaspora)

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gain much of their cultural understanding in contradistinction to the cultural dominance of whites.

The peoples of Africa, on the other hand, have ethnicities whose sources are intrinsic and assertive in character. Their cultural and societal fiber derives from thousands of years of fierce institutional continuity. An Ibo in Nigeria is culturally definable, regardless of the manipulations of white colonialists. The Hutu in Burundi exist within a cohesive societal fabric producing an enduring individual identity. Nowhere in Africa was European imperialist rule culturally and socially important enough to negate the intrinsic strength of African ethnicities. Thus while Africans fully resented colonial racism, the new African states are little affected by this racist legacy and much more by the memory of ancient bonds and conflicts between tribal or ethnic groups.

But Afro-American ethnicity is forever ambivalent in form. Each generation of American blacks must ask itself again and again: What is blackness? Or, in the pathetic words of Countee Cullen, a leading poet in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s:

> One three centuries removed
> From the scenes his fathers loved,
> Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
> What is Africa to me?[1]

Afro-American ethnicity is perpetually precarious in content and meaning, and this leads to a gnawing loneliness that stimulates uses of ethnicity that are often excessively cathartic.

It is, then, precisely this kind of difference between *being African* and *being Afro-American* (or Jamaican, Haitian, and so on) that has plagued endeavors at globalizing black ethnicity. The Black Muslims in the 1960s, because they assumed that Africans have a natural predilection for American blacks of Muslim persuasion, concluded they would be more successful than other Diaspora blacks at forging links with Africans. But the Black Muslims had very little success. Why?

Above all, because African leaders and modernized Africans in general do not require the catharsis associated with the Muslims' doctrine of antiwhite separatism—a doctrine that has its origins in the Afro-American's experience with white racism and derives its present-day meaning from this historical experience.

Similarly, there were numerous black separatists in the 1960s who often felt that African diplomats and students living in America should join in the black Americans' growing antipathy toward intimate social intercourse with whites. As it happened, few African diplomats and students seriously cared to uphold this attitude. This was, in turn, difficult for antiwhite black activists to rationalize, forcing them into a recognition of the loneliness associated with their blackness.

III

The special complex of cultural identity and habits we call ethnicity has always proved elusive in modern societies. This has been devastatingly so for Afro-Americans. Ambivalent in form and precarious in meaning, black ethnicity must be perpetually retrieved—fought for and fabricated, as it were, from issue to issue, from event to event, and epoch to epoch. Thus both in America and elsewhere in the black Diaspora—Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad, Brazil, and so on—it is difficult to translate black ethnicity into a present-day principle of sacrifice, altruism, and group tenacity in behalf of long-range goals.

Consequently, most endeavors to transnationalize black ethnicity into a force supporting Africa's advancement have been fraught with dilemmas. Insofar as black ethnicity shows little capacity to stimulate the flow of resources in behalf of long-run goals, leaders who attempt to mobilize blacks at the transnational level fall into two groups: (1) *true believers* in the global efficacy of black ethnicity, despite the contrary evidence of history; or (2) *demagogues* who, knowing that their goals are unattainable, pursue through ritualistic and charismatic manipulation a hidden agenda of personal power and wealth.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, many endeavors to mobilize black ethnicity in the United States into a transnational movement were of both types. The most prominent were the Liberian settlers' movement and the Gar-

[1] "Heritage," in Countee Cullen, *Color* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1925).

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vey movement, officially called the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

The Liberian settlement movement, which had begun before the Civil War, was riddled with contradictions. While claiming they wanted to retrieve their African heritage, the Afro-American settlers in Liberia refused any serious policy of re-Africanization. The reasons for this, if not good ones, were at least understandable. Whether the settlers in Liberia fully grasped it or not, their experience as Americans within the South's plantation society had transformed them culturally to the point of no return, making re-Africanization unacceptable.

Instead, the Afro-American settlers built an authoritarian modern state over and against Liberia's indigenous African tribes. This state was reinforced by a fitful bourgeois pattern of social exclusion. Liberia's authoritarianism entailed the ultimate in moral degradation by Afro-American settlers—namely, participation in the sale of slaves in the era between the two world wars, causing enormous embarrassment for the black American intelligentsia.

It is precisely this kind of globalized ethnicity that produces perplexing moral and intellectual dilemmas. This is evident, for example, in the impact of IRA terrorism in Northern Ireland upon the Irish American intelligentsia and the impact of Israeli treatment of Palestinian refugees upon the Jewish American intelligentsia. Only a few individuals among either group display a will to articulate these dilemmas and to confront them. It was front-page news when several leading members of the Irish American intelligentsia (including Senators Edward Kennedy and Daniel P. Moynihan) signed a petition critical of the IRA and especially of Irish American funds for the IRA. And Governor Carey's criticism of terror by both IRA and Protestants in Northern Ireland received prime news coverage, being a rare act. The same is true for the activity of a few Jewish American intellectuals—such as Herbert Kelman at Harvard University—who seek discourse with liberal Arab and Palestinian intellectuals.

Liberian slave-dealing produced a similar moral and intellectual crisis in the years between the two world wars. Leading figures in the Afro-American intelligentsia—among them W. E. B. DuBois, then a major figure in the NAACP—were so entrapped by the catharsis provided by the Liberian enterprise that they were unable to critically confront the Liberian government's sale of slaves to Spanish plantations along the West African coast, despite thorough League of Nations documentation.[2]

It was, however, the Garvey movement whose style of globalizing black ethnicity first galvanized an active popular following in black America, touching the emotions of the average working-class and lower-class urban Afro-American, as well as those of many small-town ones. Central to Garvey's leadership of the "Back-to-Africa" movement was his affirmation of the cultural superiority of the sector of Afro-Americans that was linked to the dark-skinned folk Negro.

Garvey celebrated the kinky hair of the dark- and black-skinned folk Negro, his short stature, his flattened nose, his full and fleshy lips. And with equal fervor he castigated the light- and brown-skinned minority that dominated the Afro-American middle class and the artisan working class, lambasting their hair because of its likeness to the straight hair of whites, ridiculing their skin color because it was not black enough. Garvey was the first to articulate a form of black ethnicity that addressed its basic flaws—its culturally reactive attributes and the complex of ambiguous and negative identities that inform it.

Though failing to institutionalize a global form of black ethnicity, the Garvey movement did pass on to black America a ritualistic approach to transnational issues. This legacy persists. It is as essentially cathartic in content today as it was in Garvey's era, bereft of any serious capacity to forge what might be called "a Jewish type of ethnicity."

IV

American Jews, as is well known, have successfully extended their ethnicity in the service of Israel's development. Millions of dollars

[2] See I. K. Sundiata, *Black Scandal: America and the Liberian Labor Crisis, 1929–1936* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1979).

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underwrite this process. Vast financial, managerial, and technical skills of American Jews have been transported to Israel, along with massive American government aid. This is what I mean by "a Jewish type of ethnicity."

Had the character of black American ethnicity been different, more like that of American Jews, the legacy of culturally strident movements among Afro-Americans would also have been different. The black population today would number among its middle and upper classes thousands of individuals like the thousands of Jewish Americans who are closely knitted together in behalf of globalizing Jewish ethnicity.

Examples of such Jewish Americans are reported daily in the obituary columns, as, for example, the report in the *Boston Globe* (May 2, 1977) on the death of Harry Levine, 81, a plastics manufacturer-inventor who in his adult years was active in Jewish agencies that sustain Israel. Harry Levine elaborated his Israel-sustaining ties through participation in a bewildering maze of organizations: he was a member of the American Zionist Youth Commission; a founder of Camp Young Judaea of Amherst, New Jersey; chairman of the New England Zionist Youth Commission; council member of the Zionist Organization of America; member of the Chaim Weizmann Research Institute's national board; president of the New England Regional Council of the Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds; officer of the National Zionist Emergency Council, of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the Zionist Organization of America, and the United Jewish Appeal.

That black American ethnicity has never generated a similar infrastructure is simply a fact of history. Reversing this history is, moreover, problematic. Most attempts to do so fail, however much they succeed in giving some Afro-Americans emotional relief from the cultural flaws that characterize the black Diaspora.

The demise of the Black Muslims since 1976 graphically underlines this failure. The new leadership of the Black Muslims—following Elijah Muhammad's death—has deethnicized or deracialized the movement. It is now open to whites and, under Wallace Muhammad, the movement's name has been changed, in order to rid it of racial exclusivity, to the American Muslim Mission.

By now the cathartic pattern of globalizing black ethnicity—from Garvey to the Black Muslims—may have become a part of history and should be put to rest. It no longer appears to be needed, though a combination of residual racism in America and the rigidity of white rule in South Africa could rekindle black-racialist activity. Meanwhile new modes of articulating Afro-American concerns with African affairs have evolved, particularly those associated with the black foreign-policy establishment.

Many American ethnic groups have used their newly acquired political influence to shape foreign policies related to their ethnic homeland, and Afro-Americans are following this path. It is a commonplace that as American ethnic groups win power for themselves at home, they seek to use the power abroad. Thus Polish Americans supporting freedom in Communist Poland, Irish Americans supporting the Easter Rebellion, and Jewish Americans supporting the independence of Israel are, it seems, unavoidable extensions to the "homeland" of political influence that ethnic groups acquire in America. Black and Hispanic Americans now are the most recent groups to participate in this politics of globalized ethnicity.

V

Between 1965 and 1980, Afro-Americans experienced a new addition to the ranks of the black bourgeoisie—namely, *a sizable black political class*, centered around over 5,000 elected officials (congressmen, mayors, city councilors, county officials, and so on), including perhaps 20,000 bureaucrats and appointed officeholders.

The black foreign-policy establishment, which is part of this new political class, includes a sizable group of Afro-American foreign-affairs experts who work at foundations, universities, and multinational corporations. A typical member of this establishment is Franklin Thomas, the first black president of the Ford Foundation and chairman of the first national (private) commission on American policy on South Africa. With three blacks among its ten members, the commission, which

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is funded by the Ford Foundation, conducted investigations in South Africa in 1979–80 and, in 1981, issued its fine report, *South Africa: Time Running Out* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

Other typical members of the black foreign-policy cadre are—to mention only a few: Franklin Williams, president of the Phelps Stokes Fund and ambassador to Ghana during the Johnson administration; Ted Brown, an official in the (U.S.) Agency for International Development who was an African Affairs lobbyist for the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa in the 1960s; John Aubrey Davis, a political scientist at the City University of New York and the first Afro-American consultant to the State Department on African affairs; Clyde Ferguson, professor at Harvard Law School and a former ambassador to Uganda; and Clement Cottingham, a political scientist at Rutgers University who directed the Ford Foundation's technical aid program in East Africa. And there are many more.[3]

Such individuals constitute a professional elite skilled in matters that relate to foreign policy in general and Africa in particular. Since the early 1970s, this black foreign-policy establishment has increasingly replaced political activists like Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X in mediating relations between Africa and Afro-Americans. Though some persons in this new establishment employ activistic symbols in dealing with African affairs, for the most part these symbols are increasingly abandoned. As a result, the political style of the new establishment seldom generates the sort of catharsis that the Garvey movement, the Black Muslims, and the 1960s militants inspired. The politics of a foreign-policy establishment requires systematic trade-offs with other American groups that compete for foreign-policy benefits.

In recent years, Andrew Young has been the premier figure within the Afro-American foreign-policy establishment. He initiated new foreign-policy postures for the United States in crisis areas in Southern Africa—Namibia, South Africa, Angola, and Rhodesia (now independent Zimbabwe). Young's influence among Afro-Americans stimulated other political figures to concern themselves with African affairs. In particular, Young influenced a leading civil rights figure in Philadelphia, the Rev. Leon Sullivan, to persuade leading multinational corporations to curb investments in South Africa. By the late 1970s the so-called Sullivan Guidelines were adopted by several major American corporations, including the Ford Motor Company.

These policies, however, seldom gain more than marginal support among the larger American public. The reason, partly, is still the persistence of racist values that, not surprisingly, limit the capacity of the U.S. government to drop its long-standing friendly posture toward the authoritarian South African regime. A Gallup Poll for early 1977 revealed that only 39 percent of white Americans favor action against American firms operating in South Africa. A Foreign Policy Association poll, also in early 1977, found that only 10 percent of Americans favored breaking off relations with South Africa "if its racist practices persisted unchanged." Furthermore, some 51 percent of Americans "would work closely with South Africa to maintain stability in southern Africa." This attitude was, of course, a response to the influence of Communist regimes (Soviet Russia and Cuba) in southern Africa—an issue that most African governments consider secondary when compared to the racist-authoritarian practices of the South African government.

Thus while the new black foreign-policy establishment has been able to influence Amer-

[3] Other members of the black foreign-policy establishment include C. Sylvester Whitaker, a political scientist at Rutgers University and the major American expert on Nigeria; W. T. LeMelle, a Ford Foundation aid officer in Africa and the U.S. ambassador in Kenya during the Carter administration; Herschell Challenor, a political scientist now with UNESCO who formerly directed the research staff of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on African Affairs; Constance Hilliard, a Harvard-trained Arabist who heads the African section of the Senate Republican Foreign Policy Staff; Allan Keyes, a Harvard-trained political scientist who is the U.S. representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations; Randall Robinson, a Harvard-trained lawyer who directs TransAfrica, the only organized lobby among Afro-Americans concerned with African affairs; and Willard Johnson, a political scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the major American expert on the Republic of Cameroon.

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ican policies in Africa—especially in aiding the independence of Zimbabwe and facilitating action toward independence for Namibia—there remain policy areas beyond the reach of the black foreign-policy establishment.

The Reagan presidency, in most areas, has tended to reduce the influence of the black foreign-policy establishment. In the short run, this might mean that a new generation of black separatists, dissatisfied with the incremental gains of the policy technicians, will resort to militant strategies. Even so, the new black political class today, as compared to its predecessors, has ample resources—skills, leverage, and legitimacy—to effectively manage foreign-policy pressures from black ethnocentric zealots.

VI

The politics of globalized ethnicity is often more assertive in regard to the foreign-policy "rights" of ethnic groups than their foreign-policy "obligations." American ethnic groups sometimes insist upon policies toward the "homeland" that risk jeopardizing genuine American interests, as well as genuine world interests—especially the goals of peace and justice. This behavior deserves more critical attention than it has yet received.

Equally critical attention ought to be paid to the extent to which American ethnic groups back policies that create political and social dislocation in societies such as Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Cyprus, without much sensitivity to the human consequences. The thousands of lives that IRA arms—partly funded by middle-class Irish Americans—snuff out in Northern Ireland and Israel's heavy-handed governance of the West Bank Palestinians are matters that American ethnic groups can ignore only at a high moral cost. And, in that same sense, it should be a crucial concern of black leaders involved in African affairs to minimize the usual vulgarizations of globalized ethnicity.

This goal requires that the recurrent pressures for a black-separatist or black-racialist mode of mobilizing Afro-Americans around African concerns be contained. But that is not easy to achieve. For just as the ethnocentric manipulations of Irish Americans, Jewish Americans, Greek Americans, and others in the global extension of ethnicity cultivate not merely the altruistic but also the xenophobic and aggressive instincts of their supporters, so black-militant appeals cultivate a mixture of altruistic and aggressive feelings among Afro-Americans. Much political skill and courage, and moral vigilance, are required to avert this. It would be, after all, unworthy of the moral heritage of Afro-Americans—the heritage that Martin Luther King died for—should the fully justifiable aggressive feelings that they have toward South Africa be converted into support for an African race war. Andrew Young, while not always deft in his diplomacy, kept articulating this concern, much to his credit.

Yet there remain deficiencies in the posture of Afro-American leaders concerned with Africa—ethical deficiencies. Much like other American ethnic groups new to power in foreign affairs, Afro-Americans display no special sensitivity to those areas of "homeland" affairs that fall beyond the reach of mere politics. Throughout the 1970s Afro-American intellectuals, including foreign-policy experts, remained pathetically and embarrassingly silent in face of the decadent and barbarous rule of Idi Amin in Uganda—a rule of such cruelty that Amnesty International estimated that there were over 200,000 political murders in the years 1972–79.

The Afro-American press all but ignored these murders, and when it did mention them it pretended their cause lay with the colonial legacy or with current neoimperialist machinations—not with the character of the black African elites that govern Uganda. Afro-American intellectuals in general failed to grasp the moral dimension of the carnage, seizing every opportunity to excuse it by reference to the denial of human rights elsewhere in the world, especially in the racist regime that governed South Africa—rather like those Jewish American intellectuals who ignore Israel's transgression of Palestinian rights by pointing to transgressions of Arab regimes. When Congress belatedly discussed the slaughter in Uganda in 1977, Charles Diggs, a leading black congressman (D-Michigan), chairman of the African Subcommittee of the House Committee on International Relations, "was concerned that a

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congressional investigation of Uganda might divert public attention from human rights conditions in South Africa."[4]

It remains to be seen whether Afro-Americans, following the pattern set by only a few American ethnic groups, will undertake a moral and ethical scrutiny of the politics of transnationalizing black ethnicity. Unfortunately, the slavish posture of many Afro-American intellectuals toward sentimental racialism in relation to Africa—a common fare in articles in the journal *Black Scholar*—offers little ground for optimism.

VII

All of this points up a perplexing problem. When American ethnic groups project upon the stage of world politics the angst and bitterness associated with their past victimization, the tactics they employ and the solutions they propound generate their own problems. It is this feature of the politics of globalized ethnicity that cries out for attention.

Violated and brutalized peoples like the Irish, Jews, Armenians, and Afro-Americans have a natural tendency to believe that a higher morality surrounds their causes. Such ethnic groups are sometimes trapped by what might be called the fallacy of the victims—namely, that power in the hands of history's victim is ipso facto morally preeminent. In reality, people are victims because they are powerless, and though the reversal of their powerlessness is desirable, there is no guarantee whatever that newly acquired power in the hands of history's victims—the Irish, Jews, Palestinians, blacks, Kurds, etc.—will be informed by a higher morality.

Since history's victims are not morally awesome, or guided by the restraints of a higher ethics, the power they acquire must be subject to moral scrutiny. While empathy with victims is part of a critical perspective, so is vigilance toward the politics of globalized ethnicity designed to redress their oppression.

It is especially the obligation of intellectuals in globalized ethnic politics to sustain this critical attitude. A model of vigilance in this matter has been established by such American Jewish intellectuals as Irving Howe and the late Henry Pachter who, while recognizing the validity of the Israeli state, have insisted on the values of equity when considering its behavior.

For most ethnic intellectuals, the critical mind-set is arrived at after much and often torturous effort, as can be seen in the case of the Arab American intellectual Edward Said, a professor at Columbia University. Usually uncritical of the policies of Arab states in the Arab-Israeli conflict, Said recently revealed a new side to his thinking. Though deferential to some Arab clichés by referring to Israel as an "outlaw state," Said goes on to chastise the main body of Arab intellectuals

> who have played the role of translator or servant to the day's dominant [Arab] power [acting as] legitimizers of the established order, generally not agents of change. The few courageous voices have been silenced or drowned out by jealous toadies maintained by this or that regime.

He then adds, turning his sights to policies of Arab regimes, that

> one wishes that after the routine summit meetings have been held, the Arab states would finally get around to the real priorities: restoring democratic processes . . . [and] financing more education, social justice, and health, instead of internal security. . . .[5]

In a similar vein Carlos Fuentes, the Mexican novelist, recently chastised Latin American intellectuals for the immaturity of their nationalist defense of Argentina during the conflict over the Falkland Islands. Fuentes wrote while the Argentine military junta was still in power:

> You have in Argentina one of the most repulsive regimes that has ever existed in the New World, in Latin America. The junta is responsible for the disappearance, the torture, the death of tens of thousands of its own citizens. So it is very difficult to back this junta, which has now taken Argentina on an adventurous course in order to distract attention from its pitiful failings, not only on human rights—we all know this—but also its economy. . . . We cannot build societies of the future on ideology, sacred thinking, the abuse of human rights, and simplistic nationalis-

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[4] Ralph Nurnberger, "The United States and Idi Amin," *African Studies Review*, March 1982, p. 58.

[5] Edward Said, "The Arabs Should Face Their Real Priorities," *New York Times*, July 21, 1981.

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tic sentiments. We can only build secure Latin American societies on the basis of democracy, on the basis of economic justice, on the basis of human rights. We have to bring all these things together. It's the only way we can exist as real [mature] nations.[6]

In short, a critical stance demands that ethnic intellectuals insist that the moral requisites of a just world order not be sacrificed to an ethnic group's bid to redress brutalities of the past. The cost to the intellectual for meeting this obligation is no doubt heavy, often alienating, and always stressful. But who else is there to shoulder it!

It must be remarked that, in general, black intellectuals the world over—the U.S., the Caribbean, and Africa—have not yet accepted their burden of moral scrutiny. There are precious few instances of black intellectuals confronting the perversions of newly acquired power by black rulers. Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright, did so courageously during the tragic civil war in Nigeria; and the late Walter Rodney, the Guyanese historian, put his intellect at the service of human rights in Guyana, sacrificing his life in the process. But in general, black intellectuals must cease hanging on to what Carlos Fuentes calls the catharsis of "simplistic nationalistic [ethnic or racial] sentiments," while black power elites squander national resources, squash political opposition, and trample human rights underfoot.

For while the scourge of white racism—and especially South African apartheid—warrants all the opposition black intellectuals can muster, their task in today's world is larger. Black intellectuals must help unseat the runaway kleptocracy and authoritarian cruelty prevailing in many of the world's black-run regimes. The Afro-American intellectual in particular must cease hindering this task by an unsophisticated attachment to the simplistic sentiments of globalized ethnicity. □

[6] Quoted in Anthony Lewis, "Which Side Are We On?" *New York Times*, May 31, 1982.

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Cynthia Fuchs Epstein

Ideal Images and Real Roles

The Perpetuation of Gender Inequality

Popular perceptions of sex differences—lately embodied in the Reagan era's "gender gap"—too often are based on presupposed innate attributes or those set early in life. This division of the world into men's and women's roles has generated invidious comparisons: the male is typically considered strong, courageous, logical, the more dependable and competent in work situations, the more gifted in intellectual, scholarly, or artistic pursuits; the female the weaker (the "weaker sex"), more erratic in work situations, tending to be guided by emotions. Such splintered thinking that recasts the world in male and female categories has long seemed "right"; it appears in all societies, from the most primitive to the most modern.

To challenge this notion that basic differences between men and women distinguish their behavior in most spheres of activity is part of the agenda of the women's movement and of much of the "new scholarship" on gender. Its findings are surprising, since they appear to be contrary to so much popular belief and much of the older "social-scientific" findings (based on biased methodology and interpretation). But, as the sociologist Robert K. Merton has pointed out, "What everyone should know from the history of thought is that what everyone knows turns out not to be so at all."

On the basis of current research, the biological differences between men and women have little or no relevance to their behavior and capacities apart from the sexual and reproductive roles; even the effects of early gender socialization may be reversed by adult experiences. A growing body of knowledge indicates that, under the same conditions, men and women show similar competence, talent, ambition, and desire in activities that range from running races to doing scientific research. That conditions vary so regularly and decisively for men and women has more to do with divisions of power in society than with innate sex differences. It appears, furthermore, that popular investment in the "reality" of behavioral differences between the sexes is so strong that often the same behavior is labeled differently, depending on which sex is referred to.

Split thinking along male/female lines is so firmly entrenched, however, that there remains considerable resistance in theoretical scholarship as well as in popular perception to the notion that it is a social artifice with little basis in fact. I will examine some of the reasons for this conviction of gender inequality and identify some processes by which it maintains itself.

Sociobiologists argue that the division of labor by sex is a biological rather than a social response. But if this were so, sex-role assignments would not have to be coercive. Social groups do not in fact depend on instincts or physiology to enforce social arrangements—because they cannot reliably do so. Societies assign groups to be responsible for such social needs as food, shelter, and child care; nowhere do they depend on "nature" to get the jobs done. The range of work that men and women do in each society is stipulated by that society, and few individuals are permitted to choose outside the approved range. These assignments are justified on the basis of ideologies that maintain the assignments are just and based on popular cultural opinions that the arrangement is good (or that, if not, little can be done about

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it). Such ideologies and popular views, in other words, suppose that a "fit" exists between job and worker—a fit that makes sense. This argument relies on the maintenance of gender differences. Thus division according to sex is reinforced by requirements that men and women dress differently, learn different skills, and engage in different forms of activity—and violators are severely punished.

The literal binding of women's feet or constraint of their minds by law and social custom, however, is only part of the process by which the gender division of human beings perpetuates a two-class system. The hierarchy is more subtly kept in place by the insistence that people behave in the ways society's opinion-molders say they should. Thus "ideal" roles (or archetypes, in Max Weber's sense) mask real behavior. If we can look at what men and women actually do—without the distorting mirror of "ideal" gender roles—we must acknowledge a fundamental similarity in personalities, behavior, and competence.

The ideology of the powerful is translated into behavior through socialization, persuasion, imitation, custom, and even force. All these prescribe actions and attitudes for each sex while pressuring individuals to conform to the prescribed "normal" roles. Today's "typical" American worker, for instance, is popularly seen as male, even though nearly half the work force is female. And because women are not *seen* as breadwinners (although many women workers are in fact heads of households), their jobs hold less power and prestige and they are paid less than men. Here a structural distinction, whose origins are buried in history, has become institutionalized in society's value system. Since the original distinction, whatever it might once have represented, has become meaningless in the modern workplace, society's denial of reality imposes a false perception of reality on the ideal preferred by the power structure.

There is a second level to this enforcement of gender division. Social groups, as we have seen, work hard to separate the sexes, insuring that separate remains unequal. Women may live and work with men, often performing the same tasks, experiencing the same emotions, and learning the same subjects; but society must insist that they are doing different things and feeling different emotions. In the case of the two sexes, it appears that whole societies are capable of what psychologists call selective perception. Defining something as real when it is not may fly in the face of logic, but it can be partly explained by its usefulness in supporting the idea that "in-groups" have characteristics different from (and superior to) those of "out-groups."

Gender inequality, then, is maintained by the distortion and reshaping of real roles in the name of ideal roles, and the denial and mislabeling of real roles. Both processes reinforce a belief in the inevitability of social differences caused by sexual differences. Above all, they are a product of the massive social investment in maintaining these distinctions.

Because polar sex distinctions reflect dichotomous thinking, it is useful to step back for a moment to consider the general functions of such thinking. Social groups do not leave role assignments and ideology to chance. Not only is the construction of polar oppositions one possible extension of human logic, it is also, in various ways, upheld by a structure of prescribed dogmas and rules. Both Western and Eastern philosophic and religious systems (for example, Pauline Christianity) provide ideological foundations for these beliefs. One could argue, as Emile Durkheim did in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), that religions have their own self-maintaining mechanisms, and that distinctions based on polarities, such as heaven and hell, sacred and profane, good and bad—perhaps even male and female—serve these functions.

Anthropologists also have contributed much to this discussion. Sherry Ortner has explored the possibility that the female/male contrast is a metaphoric transformation of a universal nature/culture contrast.[1] Claude Lévi-Strauss attributes the transition from nature to culture to the capacity to distinguish between "us" (as a kin category) and the "other," leading to the creation of rules in favor of exogamous marriage and against incest. Thus Lévi-Strauss maintains that we can achieve a Rousseauian social contract, giving up the state of nature for

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reciprocating non-kin ties.[2] Unlike most of the basic requirements for individual survival, procreation—which is necessary to maintain society as a whole—demands paired opposites, male and female. In an extension of this observation, Lévi-Strauss has claimed that the foundation of social structure is the human capacity to build a perception of the world by perceiving opposites or contrasts.

A number of writers have examined the nature/culture distinction in various societies and analyzed its ideological consequences for women, since women are usually associated with nature and men with culture. The latter generally implies control or superiority over nature, but this distinction is by no means universal, as it depends on each society's particular characterization of nature—as, for instance, wild or orderly. The *philosophes* of the 18th century, especially Diderot, entangled mechanistic physiological theory with social and moral considerations. These writers, rejecting the corrupt mores of French society, saw a return to nature as a move toward freedom. Their view of women, though correspondingly positive, was essentially conservative; they saw women's role in civic and social reform as merely that of becoming better mothers, and Rousseau urged the importance of breast-feeding to that end. Under whatever auspices, the association of women with nature and therefore, by anatomical analogy, with child care has long provided an excuse for excluding them from the political realm.[3]

Anatomical sex characteristics, such as the physiological correlates of age, provide a framework to which cultures can attach a broad range of social differences that in fact have little to do with anatomy. But gender differences are only one aspect of the larger scheme of conceptual ordering based on dichotomous distinctions. Not only have such polarities become part of the common culture, they have been integrated into systems of scientific thought supposedly designed to be free of illogical distinctions.

Some feminist academics, notably in France, argue that science constitutes a masculine mode of thought, reflecting the order of the "outside" structures: those of system and hierarchy.[4] Defining reason and logic according to masculine/feminine opposites, such critics merely repeat what men, whose thinking they deplore, have traditionally propounded.

This has, alas, affected some modes of feminist scholarship that, like the biased research of the past, focuses on the small differences between the genders rather than on the large similarities found in human behavior—and so they conclude that men and women are essentially different.

This error has led to two faulty assumptions. The first is the assertion that feminine/masculine distinctions have an empirical reality in addition to the biological reproductive apparatus; the second, that the distinctions are also ranked. Most dichotomous conceptual pairs are linked to qualitative distinctions—for instance, good is better than bad, and beautiful better than ugly; thus male is better than female. But the hierarchical structure persists without reference to specific value judgments.

An insistence that gender differences are rooted in the most basic nature of men and women still colors the work of respected scholars in such disciplines as economics, sociology, psychology, and the hybrid field of sociobiology. Of particular note, however, is its ironic tenacity in the work of certain distinguished feminist scholars. Sociologist Jessie Bernard has suggested that women and men live in two separate cultures (even within the same households), and psychologist Carol Gilligan has asserted that they have different moral systems. Some feminist anthropologists claim that, while both men and women have power, women's power lies in the private, men's in the public sphere.

In the past, most of those who held women to be different from men judged them to be inferior. Some theorists today maintain they are different and superior. Others hold to a "separate-but-equal" notion, stressing the complementary quality of many conceptual differences. All these positions, however, perpetuate gender inequality. Moreover, dichotomous distinctions rarely avoid ranked comparisons, and, in the case of female/male, the hierarchy almost always favors the male, whatever the characteristics ascribed to each gender.

Dichotomous systems of thought serve existing power structures by reinforcing the notion

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of the we and the not-we; the deserving and the nondeserving; the competent and the incompetent. Because they are the gatekeepers of ideas (to use Lewis Coser's term), those in power can affix values to these distinctions and—when the distinctions lack a basis in reality—actually impose this conceptual inequality on reality.

Why, then, do women subscribe to their devalued position and accept the notion that they are not only "other" and different, but lesser? Like men, they are seduced by theology, tradition, and folk wisdom. The arguments of the common culture persuade them to acceptance and accommodation.[5] For example, women in the United States are negatively regarded as having emotional personalities. Anthropologists studying Iran, however, have concluded that Iranian men are seen as emotional and women as rational. Yet it should come as no surprise that the "emotional" Iranian man is accorded higher cultural esteem than the "rational" Iranian woman.

In most societies, women seek to maximize their power in those domains where they find an opportunity to exert control. Typically, these are spheres relinquished by men. The economist Myra Strober shows how this happens in employment, and in spheres that are uncontested (such as the household where, as William J. Goode pointed out in his 1963 study of family systems, women retain power only until men show a competitive interest in it).[6] The benefits of such a strategy are short-lived.

Moving into occupations that men disdain and spheres they have deserted, women are caught up in the endless routine of the household or its workplace equivalent. The activities for women are repetitious and poorly valued, and the skills they develop are rarely transferable (or are considered untransferable) to the part of the workplace that is highly regarded or highly paid. Often this work does not have discrete boundaries allowing women to know when it is finished (as in mothering and household chores).[7] Within any social class, women do more lower-class work than men. Women's work outside the home is more routine and more supervised than men's, reducing their chance of accumulating power. Indeed, the marketplace is structured so that women are virtually excluded from the reward structure set up by the powerful. Even within the same occupations, women tend to do the less visible work, as my study of lawyers, and Judith Lorber's of medical professionals, and similar investigations have shown.[8]

Because women's work overlaps the boundaries of institutional spheres, women as a group have *more* work to do than men. In modern societies, women who work in the relatively prestigious public sector also have responsibility for the household: they work two shifts, as sociologist Arlie Hochschild confirms (as, of course, do many others) in her current research on this problem. Women's domestic labor, as we now realize, suffers from not being *called* work; it is not tallied and accumulated as human capital that then becomes marketable as a resource. Women who work in the home are not, indeed, considered to be "working" at all. And although their activities there are, paradoxically, less supervised, less routine, and potentially more creative than the opportunities afforded women in the official labor force, they are simultaneously less rewarded and virtually ignored, except by other women in no position to bestow recognition and prestige. (This is not because women holding high positions are resistant to helping other women, as is widely believed in the popular culture—the term commonly used to characterize them is "Queen Bee"—but because so few women have these high positions.)[9]

The maintenance of conceptually and physically segregated spheres always reduces women's visibility, supporting the myth that women do not perform adequately even in the roles they actually occupy. Women are not perceived as working in the economically productive marketplace; their work is not viewed as essential for the perpetuation of society; and their personality traits, learning capacity, wish and ability to control, and needs to compete and excel are not seen to be essentially similar to those of men.

The maintenance of separate spheres perpetuates myths of difference in another way. It keeps women from the knowledge that the work men do is not hard or mysterious and from the truth that men, as a class, are not

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necessarily smarter, more courageous, less emotional, or even physically stronger. Exclusive clubs, special schools, and segregated workplaces not only function to keep women out of interesting and important areas of activity; they also prevent women from seeing that what men do in these places is nothing that women can't do as well—and might prefer to do. Indeed, men have been repeatedly surprised to find women performing creditably as lawyers, doctors, and prime ministers.

In the past, men have permitted women limited access to knowledge about male spheres as long as the women did not aspire to male jobs; secretaries and nurses, for instance, were not expected to become executives or physicians. Such women were often trained to perpetuate the myth of special male qualities. Thus women were not only instructed to stand by (and behind) their men as helpmates but were subject to a reward system that tied their own social rank or their very jobs to their role in the conspiracy. Several studies, for example, have observed that nurses devise ways to make doctors believe that they make decisions actually made by the nurses themselves.[10] The wife whose status depends on her husband's rank can similarly be counted on to assist in mystifying his occupational role, making it seem that he does something others cannot do.

Women's cynicism today about these sycophantic activities indicates that the agenda has not always been latent. Women's folklore, expressed through informal channels (consider the manuals of instruction provided by women's magazines), has always maintained that women know best about what men need: that men are often childlike and incompetent; that their egos need bolstering because they are unsure of themselves and easily threatened at work; that they are vulnerable, weak reeds depending on women's strength in matters of emotion; and that they cannot cope with children, the home, and other aspects of life in the female domain.

The ambivalence here is unmistakable. When women "prop up" these men, while at the same time viewing them as superior, they are also protecting their own sphere (the home) from male competition by doing exactly the kind of thing men do—asserting that women manage it better and are naturally suited to it. Women prevent men from becoming competent in the home, holding that men's personality traits are not suitable for women's roles (because they are different traits) and that men's biology impedes their acquisition of the required attitudes, such as nurturance—although some now concede that men could use remedial help in trying to become a little more like women.

Men also conspire at keeping up this incompetence (once again, real roles following "ideal" roles) because, as women well know, such skills are poorly rewarded. Social change has persuaded some men that they have missed an important part of life by neglecting such women's assignments as contact with children; others have had little choice but to fill in at some of the tasks that employed women, now newly endowed with power, have relinquished. Men, however, still get maximum rewards for minimal activity in these areas and have little incentive to improve their performance or to work harder or longer at them than women. And women, still unsure of their new gains, often hesitate to relinquish power totally in this sphere.

Because of social change, many women are no longer satisfied with secondary gains and limited power in a segregated sphere. As more and more women demonstrate competence in once-proscribed areas, reality-testing makes it difficult for both men and women to retain inaccurate conceptions of women's potential. Women continue to meet resistance, but the gatekeepers must invent new grounds for keeping them out. Women are again accused of abrogating responsibility for their children, but this time on novel evidence: critics suggest that children "no longer have a childhood" because of the greater frequency of divorce and the entrance of women into the work force.[11] Assuming negative trends in the way children are raised, such arguments inevitably (as in earlier times) trace the fault to women as mothers, not to men as fathers.

Women's demonstration of abilities equaling those of men in business, the professions, and skilled blue-collar work has often resulted in a

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backlash directed not at their technical abilities but at their interpersonal skills. In studying the position of women in law, for example, I found that male colleagues regarded them as socially awkward, stiff, inflexible (as opposed to the men's view of themselves as warm and relaxed)—and therefore unacceptable as partners in law firms. In her study of women working in traditional blue-collar jobs, Mary Walshok documents instances of women forced into incompetence by the hazards put in their way by resistant men, such as assignment to broken-down trucks or poor schedules.

But gender-linked preconceptions and prejudices cut both ways.[12] In a current study of employees in a giant corporation, I am finding that female telephone operators, whose jobs have been desegregated by sex, regard male operators as inappropriate in these "women's jobs" and expect them to be transferred to better ones faster than women. Furthermore, the men complain that customers show surprise and anger at hearing a male voice when they expect to hear a woman, sometimes taunting them as "faggots" or using other pejorative terms.

Changes in society also have meant that many women can no longer benefit from the secondary gains of gender inequality because they lack an appropriate man (husband, father, brother, son) to offer them the possibility of status, security, or "vicarious achievement" (to use Jean Lipman-Blumen's term).[13] In my current research, I have found that the women most likely to take on nontraditional blue-collar work are older women, divorced women, and black women with dependents; they all require primary rewards and are less subject to the guilt that women with employed spouses are made to feel about entering the "male" work world.

Yet many women still keep alive old beliefs about their competence. They deny their common cause with women as an underclass and cling to a definition, complimentary to men, of women as "other" (being different). Some continue to claim the secondary benefits of "femininity" even while assuming roles still regarded as belonging to the male sex. Some expression of this conflicted response can be found in a 1983 *New York Times*/CBS Poll,[14] which shows that one-fourth of a sample of Americans (men and women) feel that their lives have been improved by the women's movement. But two-thirds (responding to another question) are wary about whether women have changed for the better, and many feel that the movement has "led women astray"—even those (both men and women) whose work lives have improved in the last 15 years.

People persist in wanting to see the world in terms of sex differences. They want everyone to conform to "ideal" roles, and correspondingly to deemphasize the real roles they play. These contradictions are revealed in numerous studies. In agricultural families, for example, only men call themselves farmers, while their wives—who also work the land, drive tractors, and so on—identify themselves as housewives.[15]

In contrast to the popular view that women are unconcerned about achievement and even fear success, new investigations show that they share the same success values as men in school and in the competitive marketplace.[16] Women have been commonly believed to suffer role conflict when they work at jobs outside the home as well as performing housekeeping chores, but recent evidence demonstrates that these women actually suffer less stress than housewives who are not otherwise employed.[17] In all these instances, real roles and attitudes are ignored in order to perpetuate "ideals" that support the existing power structure by keeping women in "their" place conceptually, even if they have left it behind in practice.

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The encouraging news is that this mounting evidence makes it increasingly difficult to obscure the overwhelming similarities between men and women. Studies are also bringing to light the processes by which the powerful contrive to manufacture, overemphasize, and broadly maintain gender differences. Out of such research we can expect the realities of men's and women's lives to emerge, superseding the stereotyped perceptions of the past. Although people "manage reality" and make imaged things real, scholars and activists are discovering a nondichotomous reality and are developing a counterintelligence that may sabotage the dynamics of the self-fulfilling prophecy. This just may be the time when we discover (paraphrasing a grandfather of sociology) that "what [we thought] was solid, melts into air . . . and men [and women] at last are forced to face with sober senses the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men [and women]."

Notes

[1] Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in M. Z. Rosaldo, L. Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), pp. 67–88.

[2] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1969 [1949]); as cited in Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, eds., *Nature, Culture and Gender* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[3] Rose Laub Coser wrote recently that the Nixon administration vetoed child-care legislation in order to keep women out of the domain of men, much as opponents of busing mean to restrict black children's integration with white children. Rose Laub Coser, "Stay Home, Little Sheba: On Placement, Displacement, and Social Change," in R. Kahn-Hut, A. Kaplan Daniels, and R. Colvard, eds., *Women and Work: Problems and Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[4] Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, *New French Feminisms: An Anthology* (New York: Schocken, 1980).

[5] Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (New York: Premier Books, 1963) p. 10.

[6] Myra Strober, "Segregation by Gender in Public School Teaching: Toward a General Theory of Occupational Segregation in the Labor Market." Paper presented before the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, Committee on Women's Employment and Related Social Issues, Workshop on Job Segregation by Sex, Washington, D.C., 1982.

See also William J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

[7] Witness the old adage, "men may work from sun to sun, but women's work is never done." Modern labor practices extend this phenomenon.

[8] See my book *Women in Law* (New York: Basic Books, 1981). See also Judith Lorber and Martha Ecker, "Career Development of Female and Male Physicians," *Journal of Medical Education*, June 1983, pp. 447–56.

[9] See my article "Women's Attitudes Toward Other Women: Myths and Their Consequences," *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, July 1980.

[10] See my paper "The Dynamics of Ambiguity: Costs and Consequences for Nurses and the Nursing Profession," part of *The Fourth Conference on Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* (Kansas City, Missouri: American Nurses Association, 1979). See also Bonnie and Vern Bullough, *New Directions for Nurses* (New York: Springer, 1971).

[11] Vance Packard, *Our Endangered Children: Growing Up in a Changing World* (Boston: Little, Brown 1983). See also Marie Winn, *Children Without Childhood* (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

[12] Mary L. Walshok, *Blue Collar Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1981; paperback Doubleday/Anchor, 1983). See also my book *Women in Law* (New York: Basic Books, 1981, and paperback, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983).

[13] Jean Lipman-Blumen, Alice Handley-Isaksen and Harold J. Leavitt, "Achieving Styles in Men and Women: A Model, an Instrument and Some Findings," in Janet T. Spence, ed., *Achievement and Achievement Motives* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1983).

[14] New York Times/CBS Poll, conducted November 11–20, 1983, as reported in *New York Times*, December 19, 1983.

[15] Elise Boulding, "The Labor of Farm Women in the United States: A Knowledge Gap," paper presented before the American Sociological Association, session on "Women and Work," Boston, 1979.

[16] Debra Kaufman and Barbara L. Richardson, *Achievement and Women: Challenging the Assumptions* (New York: Free Press, 1982).

[17] Grace Baruch, Rosalind Barnett, and Caryl Rivers, *Lifeprints* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983). □

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Zbigniew Herbert

Report from a Besieged City

Three Poems

Zbigniew Herbert is one of the leading poets of contemporary Europe. He was born in eastern Poland in 1924 and started writing during the Second World War. None of his work, however, was published until the Polish "thaw" of 1956, when two collections of his poems appeared. Report from the Besieged City, *his sixth volume of poems—from which the following poems are taken—appeared in 1983 under the imprint of Kultura in Paris. An English translation, by John Carpenter and Bogdana Carpenter, will be issued in 1984 by Oxford University Press.*

Herbert's work has been translated into most European languages, and he has won a number of major European literary prizes. At present he lives in Warsaw.

We thank John Carpenter and Bogdana Carpenter for permission to print their versions of Zbigniew Herbert's poems here. — Eds.

What I Saw

To the Memory of Kazimierz Moczarski (1956)

I saw prophets tearing at their pasted-on beards
I saw imposters joining sects of flagellants
butchers disguised in sheepskin
who fled the anger of the people
playing on a block flute

I saw I saw

I saw a man who had been tortured
he now sat safely in the family circle
cracked jokes ate soup
I looked at the opened mouth
his gums—two bramble twigs stripped of bark
I saw his whole nakedness
the whole humiliation

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later
a solemn meeting
many people flowers
stifling
someone spoke incessantly about deviations
I thought of his deviated mouth

is this the last act
of the play by Anonymous
flat as a shroud
full of suppressed sobbing
and the snickering of those
who heave a sigh of relief
that again it has worked out
and after clearing away the dead props
slowly
raise

the blood-drenched curtain.

The Abandoned

1

I did not catch
the last transport

I stayed behind in a town
that is not a town

without morning
or evening newspapers

it doesn't have
prisons
clocks
water

I enjoy
great vacations
outside of time

I go for long walks
through avenues of burned houses
avenues of sugar
of broken glass
of rice

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I could write a treatise
on the sudden transformation
of life into archeology

2

There is a huge silence

the artillery in the suburbs
has choked on its own courage

sometimes
all that can be heard
is the bell of collapsing walls

and the light thunder
of sheet metal dangling in the air

there is a huge silence
before the night of the predators

at times
an absurd airplane
appears in the sky

it drops leaflets
calling for surrender

I would do it willingly
but there is no one to surrender to

3

I live now
in the best hotel

the dead porter
remains on duty in his room

from a hill of rubble
I enter directly
onto the second floor
to the suite
of the former mistress
of the former chief of police

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I sleep on sheets of newspapers
I cover myself with a poster
announcing the final victory

in the bar there is still
medicine for solitude

bottles with yellow fluid
and a symbolic label

— Johnnie
tipping his top hat
walking rapidly to the West

I have no resentment against anyone
that I was abandoned

I was short of
luck
and the right hand

on the ceiling
a light bulb
recalls a skull turned upside down
I wait for the victors

I drink to the fallen
I drink to the deserters

I overcame
bad thoughts

I was abandoned even
by the presentiment of death.

The Trial

During his great speech the prosecutor
kept piercing me with his yellow index finger
I'm afraid I didn't appear self-assured
unintentionally I put on a mask of fear and depravity
like a rat caught in a trap an informer a fratricide
the reporters were dancing a war dance
slowly I burned at a stake of magnesia

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all of this took place in a small stifling room
the floor creaked plaster fell from the ceiling
I counted knots in the boards holes in the wall faces
the faces were alike almost identical
policemen the tribunal witnesses the audience
they belonged to the party of those without any pity
and even my defender smiling pleasantly
was an honorary member of the firing squad

in the first row sat an old fat woman
dressed up as my mother with a theatrical gesture she raised
a handkerchief to her dirty eyes but didn't cry
it must have lasted a long time I don't know even how long
the red blood of the sunset was rising in the gowns of the judges

the real trial went on in my cells
they certainly knew the verdict earlier
after a short rebellion they capitulated and started to die
one after the other
I looked in amazement at my wax fingers
I didn't speak the last word and yet
for so many years I was composing the final speech
to God to the court of the world to the conscience
to the dead rather than the living
roused to my feet by the guards
I managed only to blink and then
the room burst out in healthy laughter
my adoptive mother laughed also
the gavel banged and this really was the end

but what happened after that—death by a noose
or perhaps a punishment generously changed to a dungeon
I'm afraid there is a third dark solution
beyond the limits of time the senses and reason

therefore when I wake I don't open my eyes
I clench my fingers don't lift my head
breathe lightly because truly I don't know
how many minutes of air I still have left.

Translated from the Polish by JOHN CARPENTER and BOGDANA CARPENTER □

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Gabriel Zaid

Salvadorans Go to the Ballot Box

Gabriel Zaid's "Enemy Colleagues" was featured in the Winter 1982 issue of Dissent. *The article generated enormous interest and comment. Below we present what Gabriel Zaid considers a sequel to the earlier article. Like "Enemy Colleagues," this article will stir strong responses, and we will be pleased to print brief, succinct comments of those who disagree with Mr. Zaid.*—Eds.

Ever since Condorcet formulated his paradox, it has been impossible to believe that every (free and clean) election clearly expresses the general will. The distribution of voters' preferences can yield incongruous results. For example, let's suppose that a third of the voters prefers A first, B second, and C last; that another third prefers B, then C, then A; and that the last third chooses C first, then A, and last B. One majority of two-thirds thereby chooses A over B, another B over C, while yet another of the same proportion prefers C over A. This is to say: "the" majority prefers A over B and B over C (which is not incongruous)—but also C over A (instead of A over C, as would be expected). In modern terms, the sum of "rational" wills can be "irrational."

The problem lies in expecting the general will to function like the will of a powerful individual who thinks, chooses, and acts rationally—that is, viewing collective sovereignty in the image of an enlightened sovereign. In this perspective, the plural voice will never speak with the executive clarity of the One, though there are miraculous moments in which it may sound like one. Further, in practice, many possible mandates—clear, broad-based, and realistic—can come out of a ballot box.

Such mandates are not always present nor can they always be fulfilled, as theoreticians from Condorcet to Arrow have shown. If we add to all this the problems of who is to vote and how, systems of runoffs and tallying, formulations of choices (not to mention that the elections might not be so free and so clean), one can see why so many—especially among poorer populations—don't think much of elections. What they would really like to see is a good dictator: the One who can assume the sovereignty over all and impose order on the plural will—the One who can make it one will. Far more than elections, and hence than the plural will, they value the single-minded will that stands, in their eyes, for order and progress.

This disregard for political pluralism ignores a more basic problem: armed pluralism. People who live in societies that no longer face this problem can afford the luxury of forgetting that some free and clean elections are not primarily an instrument to facilitate democratic government from the bottom, nor a means of self-legitimization for those on top. An election often is a solution to conflicts at the top—a solution that may also be in the clear interest of those below.

Those at the top who aspire to be the One have three alternatives in deciding who that One will be. They can kill each other off until only the One is left; they can strike a private bargain to name (or not to name) the One and then try to gain advantages (or even to alter the

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bargain) by pressuring or fighting one another in other than armed or public ways; or they can debate openly and submit the decision to public judgment, though this might prove as inscrutable as the Judgment of God or as random as the flip of a coin.

We are speaking here of a minimal submission to the will of the people at the bottom in order to resolve a conflict at the top, with decisive effects both above and below. The submission is real, the legitimacy authentic, and the mandate compelling though usually not very precise. It can seem trivial compared to the grand fantasy that sees the general will as if it were One voice, governing with full executive power, conveying precise orders from below. But this minimal submission to the electoral process is progress, when weighed against the condition of those at the bottom—those who provide the cannon fodder for settling the conflicts at the top. The innovation in earlier times of generals doing personal battle in front of their troops, reducing them to public spectators, was noble and human in its terms—as is the innovation of the ballot. Those who mock voters today as no more than mere spectators are mocking the blood tax.

In El Salvador as in Nicaragua, there is no lack of candidates for a good dictator. But there is no dictator. In both countries, there is an armed pluralism, which as yet has led neither to dictatorship nor to political pluralism. In 1979 the Sandinist military leaders, after repeated failures on the battlefield, achieved a political feat that led them to victory: they overcame their rivalries, aligned and coordinated themselves internally and with the civilian opposition. This consensus—abetted by Somoza's talent for alienating even his closest associates (at home and abroad) and by his blind conviction that repression would suffice—brought the dictator down. But this was a negative consensus, directed against Somoza. It neither favored a Nicaraguan Castro, who never emerged, nor a specific, new regime. Yet the problem of specifics and of the character of the leadership presented itself at the moment of victory; it has yet to be resolved. The comandantes opted to share power, instead of choosing the One. And they did not submit to elections—perhaps because they feared that the spectacular seizure of the National Palace by Edén Pastora would give him an electoral advantage. They supposed, with good reason, that he would be less adept at committee politics than at capturing public attention.

The decisions of a ruling committee tend toward adventurous or conservative extremes. It will be relatively easy for the more active members to launch adventures that don't affect their colleagues (or might even benefit them)—especially if they present their schemes in ways that place rejection in a bad light (such as weakness in the face of treason, of subversion, of "enemies of society"). Yet actions that will affect the members' personal interests tend to be conservative rather than bold; it is safer to agree to let matters ride than to attempt changes that will be to everyone's liking. And as a change might precipitate popular elections to determine the One, thus leading to the abdication of our ruling committee, it is easy to understand the reluctance to act.

The risk of opting to win the game is attractive only to those who think they're the top players. The others are better off postponing definitions until they can be formulated in the most advantageous terms to themselves. They reveal their goals little by little, through inside channels, a deal here and a coalition there, partial seizures of power, accumulations of strength, and *faits accomplis*.

Mexico's armed pluralism, in the 19th century, was resolved by a military caudillo (Porfirio Díaz) who knew how to get rid of his cronies or to subordinate them and, at the same time, to establish a system of strong power centers: a number of strong men ruling over territorial zones. The Revolution of 1910 destroyed this system. And, in the years 1913–28, the new chiefs (unable to come to terms among themselves) killed each other off. They were replaced by a system for sharing power by turns, which prevails to this day. Yet one important change was made in 1946, when the revolutionary caste handed over power peacefully to the university-educated caste, beginning with "the kids of the Revolution"—the military leaders' children, who were far better educated than their fathers.

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El Salvador's military leaders, unlike those in Mexico, are university graduates. They don't feel insecure in the presence of their sons, their civilian colleagues, or the bourgeois kids who have attended the university and decided that they aren't willing to wait for the day when the army will yield its power peacefully, but want to seize it by force of arms.

The army's officers, on the other hand, have reached an understanding among themselves and with the landowners to the effect that, by means of their National Reconciliation party (a telling name), power is to be shared by turns, yet will always remain in military hands. Their major concession has been to allow a young civilian university graduate to become mayor of San Salvador—José Napoleón Duarte—who, during his term in office (1963–1970), gained wide popularity because of the integrity and accomplishments of his administration. But they didn't allow Duarte to become president in 1972—although he had won the elections legitimately, with a civilian coalition that included the Social Democrats and even the Communist party and was headed by the Christian Democratic party (to which he belonged).

The progressive ferment of those days was dashed by this and other electoral frauds, and by the usual repressive measures (though not massive repression as that of 1932, which was to return by the end of 1979). Thus many among the intelligentsia, tired of the role of loyal opposition, went over to the Communist party, which they found only mildly radical; they ended up siding with the guerrillas. This renunciation, by civilians, of a civilian solution was a great boon to those who favored violence—those members of the army and of the guerrilla movement who saw no solution other than one achieved by force of arms.

The Salvadoran army preserved its unity until the triumph of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. A few months later it lost control over its left wing and shortly thereafter over its right wing too. In October 1979 the Military Youth Organization, headed by Colonel Adolfo Majano, led a coup aimed at imposing a policy of *apertura a sinistra* ("an opening to the left"). He called on the parties of the left to share power, and they accepted. Thus, in 1979, in this irregular fashion, a military officer conceded to the civilian coalition of 1972 and 1977 the power of which the other officers, also in irregular fashion, had deprived it.

There is a dark side to this bloodless coup. Because the guerrilla movement was effectively sidelined, one of its comandantes (Joaquín Villalobos) set out to provoke a massive repression. He didn't have long to wait for a chance, since by no means all of the army accepted Majano's solution. Roberto D'Aubuisson took advantage of Majano's decree that had dissolved the agencies of repression (ORDEN, ANSESAL) to move the terror underground and make it massive, widespread, and almost impossible to control. Majano threw him in jail, thus ending both their careers as crusaders within the army. Its leadership was anxious to restore "national reconciliation" (that is, reconciliation within the army itself, then split in two directions, left and right). Majano was replaced in the Junta and left the country; D'Aubuisson was released from jail and expelled from the army.

In El Salvador as in Nicaragua, the leftist officers (coup leaders, revolutionaries) invited the civilian left to govern alongside them, in committees that were, however, incapable of controlling the sectarian and factional elements. In both countries, the civilians soon began to withdraw: in El Salvador, horrified at belonging to a murderous regime; in Nicaragua, unhappy over the drift toward a Cuban-style militarized society.

It is José Napoleón Duarte's dubious merit to have had the stomach to join the Junta at a time when others were beginning to withdraw. (He had taken no part in the initial stages of its government, having been in exile in Venezuela since 1972, when, robbed of his election, he had suffered a second blow after supporting the head of the National Guard in an abortive coup attempt.) But it proved a lucky break for the Salvadorans that, from 1980 to 1982, the army and Duarte tolerated each other, under pressure from the United States. Not so much because of his agrarian reforms or the nationalization of the banking and agro-export sectors (a more radical reformism than anyone had expected from the Junta in the midst of a civil

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war); and surely not for his handling of the assassinations, which he was unable to control—but because he insisted, somewhat foolhardily under the circumstances, on sticking with the Junta that had called him to power. And things did not return to the old state of affairs, to the regime of military presidents sponsored by the National Reconciliation party that usually had "won" the elections from the civilian candidates. Thus the groundwork was laid, first for the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1982, and then for the two rounds of presidential elections in 1984, with legislative elections currently under preparation for 1985.

The three elections were boycotted by the guerrillas and viewed with contempt by a good part of the international press, but not by the voters—those who supply the victims while no agreement is in sight at the top. Significantly, the biggest losers in the elections have been those who recruit, often by force, the hands to hold the guns: the leadership of the guerrillas and that of the army. The guerrillas have demonstrated (since January 1981, when they called for a "general insurrection" as part of "the final offensive") time and again that they do not command a majority. (The clearest vote against them has come from the 600,000 to 700,000 peasants who, voting with their feet, have left the country. If a tenth of those with nothing to lose but their chains were to join the guerrilla force, it would number many more fighters than the army.) The army, too, has been a big loser. Its political arm, the National Reconciliation party, dropped out after the first round of elections with a showing of 19 percent, despite the assistance they received from the CIA (like Duarte—but unlike D'Aubuisson, who got support from the U.S. private sector). Despite the fact that the party's victory would have been a good thing for the army, the oligarchy, and the United States. Despite the fact that the party, honoring its name, had offered a third solution—somewhere between Duarte and D'Aubuisson.

It had been widely thought that Francisco José Guerrero, the National Reconciliation party's candidate, might score an upset—considering the support he enjoyed and the precedent of 1982, when the Constituent Assembly, confronted with the dilemma of choosing between Duarte and D'Aubuisson, had discarded them both in favor of a third, Alvaro Magaña. But the voters didn't want this solution. They rejected Guerrero, perhaps because he represented the army and the very party that had stolen the 1972 and 1977 elections. More audaciously still (in terms of "national reconciliation"), the voters narrowed the margin between Duarte and D'Aubuisson in the runoff elections. In the first round D'Aubuisson received 30 percent to Duarte's 43 percent; in the second, 46 percent to Duarte's 54 percent. D'Aubuisson was not all that far from winning, and so confident was he of victory that he accused Duarte beforehand of preparing a coup.

Nobody now, really, was sure of what was going to happen in the election. An unexpected twist: it was said that in the runoff elections the voter turnout would diminish, because the people would grow weary (that being the third election since 1982) and because they now could document their prior participation in voting, they would have less reason to fear repression. But the number of voters increased from 1,266,276 to 1,404,366 (out of a possible total of some 2 million, in a population of some 4.5 million).

Duarte's election is not the solution to the Salvadoran conflict, but it is a decisive first step. It is a triumph of civilian society in the face of the army and the guerrilla movement. The army now recognizes the failure of its various efforts to take political control of the society: the "legal" solution through the National Reconciliation party, Majano's left-looking coup, and D'Aubuisson's terror. The army now feels the pressure of the mounting stockpiles of foreign arms (both its own and the rebels'); it is discredited by its bungling and heavy-handedness; and it is nervous over the rupture of its internal unity. And so it now prefers to follow the example of other Latin American armies: leave the problem to the civilians. After the terrible cost in blood and destruction, the army must now own up to its error—"the lesser evil," as it was thought of at the time—of having defrauded the elections. It

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must submit to the inscrutable judgment of those voters who, 12 years later, once again have elected Duarte. That dirty trick of tampering so arrogantly with an election merely goaded on the rebels, the coup-makers, the death squads: it unleashed armed pluralism.

Of course, neither the rebels nor the death squads have disappeared. And the only thing that makes sense (morally, politically, pragmatically) is to begin by eliminating the death squads. The first priority is to bolster the society's confidence in itself, in order to gain some civil ground in the face of the violence, and to do so before winning the civil war, whose very nature resists a definitive triumph. The guerrillas can press on for many years without getting anywhere. At the moment, in response to the Salvadoran elections and taking advantage (as they did four years ago) of the diversion of the U.S. presidential election campaign, they are preparing another "final offensive" that will in no way be final. Yet, if the guerrillas couldn't win over the majority to their side in 1981, how much less so now. And though stronger than ever in military terms, their forces are adequate only for harassment, not victory. More than military triumph they now seek a political one: to negotiate surrender in exchange for a share of power—or, failing that, to provoke a U.S. invasion.

The concession of a share of power (territorial, for example, along the lines of Mexico in the last century or, more recently, of Zimbabwe) is not inconceivable. It might be attractive to the suppliers of rebel arms. It would reduce their expenses and give them some tangible return on their investments, instead of increasing them indefinitely in hopes of winning big at some point down the road, who knows how far. It would also be attractive to those guerrillas who, since the fall of Somoza, have fought five frustrating years in expectation of a swift collapse of the Salvadoran regime. But not to those who believe in protracted warfare—a difference in strategy that lies behind the assassination of comandante Ana María Martínez by her own comrades, behind the "suicide" of Marcial, and behind the appearance of the Clara Elizabeth Ramírez Metropolitan Front, which is a splinter from the Popular Liberation Front and dedicated to assassination and other desperate acts aimed at wrecking any possible negotiated solution.

Nor would such a concession be attractive to the civilian population, since it would be a negation of the elections. Nor to the army, for whom it would mean accepting military defeat from the rebels, and political defeat from the civilians. Nor will this solution fit Reagan's Manichean policies. And it will surely not appeal to anyone realistic enough to see that the guerrillas, in a shared government, would be unable to control those of their colleagues who are committed to protracted warfare. For these guerrilla leaders (and for the military), sharing power will always be a defect to be overcome.

To provoke a U.S. invasion is a more realistic objective. It would be a political triumph similar to the one Joaquín Villalobos so proudly celebrated upon triggering the massive repression at the end of the year 1979. Let us hope that the public accountability of the U.S. government, the pressure from other countries, and Duarte's adroitness will combine to avert such a tragic blunder. Assuming this will be so, it is likely that many guerrillas—and above all their arms suppliers—will be unwilling to continue indefinitely on the path of civil war. There now are signs that students and intellectuals are becoming disillusioned with their own messianism, weary of getting nowhere, fed up with internal squabbling and with the dependence on Cuba. Surely, Castro and the Sandinistas must be getting quite sick of their Salvadoran clients, of their trumpeted "final offensives" that end in fiascos, their greater talent for assassinating each other than for inspiring popular enthusiasm. These supporters must be sick of being compromised and paying heavy bills for nothing. At this point, they have more to hope for from U.S. blunders than from guerrilla successes.

In short: concerning the conflict at the top, Duarte's election means above all that the army has had to relinquish its exclusive internal voting and decision-making in favor of the civilian ballot box. It means that neither the Majanos nor the D'Aubuissons can count any longer on a majority of their colleagues. Since the guerrillas have also committed atrocities

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and shown themselves incapable of winning—and since there now is a nonmilitary, civilian alternative for the democratic left that didn't exist before—one can only hope that the guerrilla movement will continue to lose popular support, that it will come to lose its backing in the Socialist International and, finally, that of its arms suppliers. At that point, accepting the solution proposed by the Contadora group (until now underestimated, like the elections) would consecrate the civilian approach on an international scale.

As for the conflict between top and bottom, the fundamental gain for those at the bottom would essentially lie in the reduction of the blood tax—which the people of El Salvador have been paying for so long—and in the possibility of calling their government to public account. Other important gains, too, are possible within the scope of Duarte's reformist platform, though he cannot act as an absolute sovereign. He will be constrained by pressures from all classes. At present, the cotton growers (who haven't forgiven him for the triple blow to their agrarian, banking, and export interests), like the guerrillas, are preparing a welcoming party for him: they have vowed not to replant their fields unless he authorizes a more attractive price for their cotton.

But opposition will not come from the oligarchy alone. Almost half the population voted for a man widely reputed to be a murderer and who accuses Duarte of being "a Communist." Once it became clear that Duarte would be the likely winner in the runoff, the greater number of those who hadn't voted the first time around, or who had voted for one of the other six candidates, cast their ballots for D'Aubuisson. This paradoxical voting, with its reminder of Condorcet, speaks of a conflict below, of a divided society, of the need for the civilian president chosen by popular vote to seek the "national reconciliation" that the military has never found.

Translated from the Spanish by DAVID PRITCHARD □

Print No Evil

Whitehall is using its muscle to suppress an international report on the poverty created by long-term unemployment in Britain and other industrialized countries. British officials are comforted that the American government has joined in their efforts to delete a whole chapter of next September's issue of *The Employment Outlook*, published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). They are now almost certain to get their way.

The study draws on the work of a British academic, Mr. David Piachaud, of the London School of Economics. His analysis leads to the conclusion that unempmloyment causes real poverty, especially if it lasts over six months.

OECD reports on member countries' economies often tone down criticisms because the government concerned objects to something in the draft report. But seldom—if ever—has a whole chapter of a broad economic study been chopped because of governmental opposition.

The Employment Outlook has already aroused criticism. Its first issue last September was attacked by monetarist economists for the gloomy picture it painted of the future. It said that some 20 million jobs would have to be created in the OECD countries by 1990 just to keep unemployment at today's rates; 35 million to get back to the levels of 1979. Critics said its doubts that this could be done ignored the job creation that could follow, for example, a fall in real wages or a shift in the economy toward lower-paid jobs (in service industries) for workers losing jobs in manufacturing.

The Treasury is puzzled by recent British unemployment figures, which show the trend still rising, in conflict with forecasts in its model of the economy. The subject is a sensitive one. Mrs. Thatcher is being heavily briefed on it, fearing that the issue, which seemed to cost her nothing in the 1983 election, could cost her heavily next time.

The number of people out of work in Britain for over a year has been rising alarmingly to over 1 million, that is, 37 percent of the jobless total. And, as the OECD study shows, these are the jobless who can suffer real hardship. The study is admittedly incomplete, partly because of the difficulties of comparing welfare benefits in different countries. Nor does it particularly single out Britain. But it does show that the much cited unemployed family man, previously on very low wages, who gets nearly as much on the dole as in work, is only one in 20 of those out of work; and that most unemployed get poorer very quickly. This is not the sort of truth that goes down well in saloon bars in the home counties. Nor, evidently, in Whitehall.

From *The Economist* (London), June 16, 1984 □

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Yoram Ben-Porath

Israeli Dilemmas: Economic Relations Between Jews and Arabs

The idea of a Jewish homeland lends itself to more than one interpretation. We start with the premise that a Jewish homeland should serve Jewish national goals and, in doing so, conduct itself according to Jewish norms and values. To do that it must be predominantly Jewish, a necessary but not at all a sufficient condition. Both Jewish goals and values, always subjects of controversy, have changed over time. Those who see Judaism mostly as rooted in humanistic beliefs inevitably are torn when tension flares up between these values and the achievement of Jewish goals.

Zionism envisioned the growth of the Jewish community in Palestine through immigration, that is, Aliyah ("going up") from other lands. Imbedded in the Zionist dream were social and utopian ideals. The dominant forces in Zionism shared the ideals of the return to the land, the achievement of a healthy occupational structure, and the building of a just society that would rely on its own labor. These ideals, largely forged by the Second and the Third Aliyah in the first quarter of this century, became the cornerstone of labor Zionism but were shared well beyond its ranks throughout the Zionist movement. Thus the Zionist movement saw itself as effecting a social revolution, and the Jewish homeland it strove to create indeed had a social content. This aspiration in fact distinguished the Jewish settlement in Palestine from the European colonies in what is now called the Third World. This distinction has been of paramount importance in how the Zionist movement viewed itself, and it has governed the debate between Zionists and their opponents.

The desire to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine—a country then sparsely populated by Arabs who started to perceive their own national identity at about the same time (roughly, the turn of the century)—was bound to generate serious dilemmas. These were further compounded by the economic and social differences in the conditions of Jews and Arabs. While some chose to ignore the Arab problem, the potential conflict haunted Zionism's political leadership and was the subject of ideological debate throughout the century. Until the mid-1940s, the entire Zionist camp regarded all of Palestine (with or without Transjordan) as its frame of reference. Yet the contradiction between the desire to have a Jewish state and the reluctance to dominate Arabs could not be repressed. As late as 1937, in his testimony before the Royal Commission, David Ben-Gurion stated:

> We did not say to make Palestine a Jewish state. . . . We do not say it now. Our aim is to make the Jewish people master of its own destiny. . . . It is not our aim to dominate anybody else. [Quoted in *The Case for a Binational State*, Hashomer Hatzair Workers' Party of Palestine, 1946.]

On the long road that led from a vague notion of a Jewish homeland to a sovereign Jewish state in part of Palestine, several options were considered. "Parity" in running the

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central government and cantonization were among the ideas offered as to how Jews and Arabs might share power. A proposal for a binational state, in which the two communities would enjoy quasi-federal rights, was advocated by Brit Shalom and Hashomer Hatzair.

The official Zionist position, which advocated statehood since 1942, leaned toward partition: separate Jewish and Arab states after the end of the Second World War. In all the partition plans the Jewish state would include a significant Arab minority. And very much to the point, the principle was accepted by the Jewish Agency. This solution rested on the argument that the rights of the Arab minority would be protected by pressure on the Jewish state from the surrounding Arab countries.

Three aspects of the economic relationship between Jews and Arabs are relevant here:

The extent of market integration • options ranging from total economic separation, through controlled trade, to completely free trade in goods and services, including the free movement of labor.

The extent of public and institutional integration • the degree to which the two peoples live as equals in a single institutional framework, or

Symmetry or balance in political power • the extent to which the two peoples assert themselves in social and economic matters.

Whatever the dilemmas confronting Jews and Arabs, they inevitably are reflected in the economic sphere. The major options here have been and are:

- Completely segregated Jewish and Arab economies.
- Completely integrated economic and social communities with equal access to and control over the public sector.
- Free trade but distinct institutional structures and public sectors, with Jewish supremacy.
- Trade and economic cooperation between the two communities, with each having its own, separate political structure.

In this century, Jews and Arabs in Palestine have lived together under different political arrangements. While none of these conform to any of the models listed above, they illuminate the separate issues.

I: Separation — Policy and Practice

THE DOMINANT ZIONIST POLICY under the British Mandate and in the early years of the state was largely one of separation. The logic of separation rested on the conflict between the social aims of Zionism and the reality of a wide gulf between Jews and Arabs in skills and standards of living. It also rested on relative numbers: Jews constituted less than one-tenth of Palestine's population after the First World War and approximately one-third at the end of the Mandatory period.

Two of the most important aspects of direct economic relations concerned labor and land. To establish a viable Jewish community necessitated acquisition and control of land. Purchasing land and protecting property rights became important parts of the struggle over Palestine. The Jewish demand for land raised land values, and the consequent transfer of liquid capital contributed to economic change in the Arab sector. Most of the land was purchased from wealthy landowners, and less than one-tenth was bought from small farmers. The economic effect of these land transfers fanned dispute between Jews and Arabs in the political arena (particularly as it concerned the displacement and compensation of tenants), but this was secondary to the inevitable clash over territory.

Arab competition in the labor market conflicted with the national goal of increasing the Jewish population through immigration. It depressed wages below subsistence levels for Jewish labor, and it reduced employment opportunities for Jewish immigrants. "Normalization" of the Jewish occupational structure was to be achieved by inverting the existing pyramid: broadening the base of primary occupations and narrowing the apex of tertiary occupations. As a healing goal, it would rid the Jewish people of their "parasitic" economic role. Moreover, a literal "return to the land" was essential if a durable hold on the country was to be established. Market integration with the Arab population would undermine this goal

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since Arab labor tended to concentrate in primary occupations.

Separation was also desired on basic institutional levels. Zionism's social objectives were concerned with Jewish society. Given the great gap in living standards and levels of education and health, it was in the Jewish interest to separate the provision of public services and diminish the spillover of resources, through taxation, from the Jewish sector into the Arab sector. The British government defended such a spillover of resources on grounds of equity and progress in an integrated society. But this was not the view of Jews (who were then a minority).

A highly developed dual institutional structure emerged during the Mandatory period: the Jewish Agency as a quasi-government; the Haganah as a quasi-army; the educational system; the Histadrut (Jewish labor-union federation) with its medical insurance and mutual-aid associations; Jewish economic institutions, such as banks, cooperative movements, the Jewish National Fund (the national landownership authority), and municipalities. All these combined to form the skeleton of the Jewish state in the making.

Of course, the Mandatory government and the municipalities of the mixed towns forced some organizational cooperation. There were instances of joint action on economic matters, but on the whole the Arab and the Jewish communities existed under a dual institutional system. With the Arab side less organized, the Mandatory government acted as a counterweight, serving the interests of the Arab community.

This separatist institutional structure was vital to the development of the Jewish economy and society. It often actively sought to prevent or impede the process of market integration, which feeds on economic realities. Many elements in the organized Jewish sector helped create barriers to labor integration: the separate organization of Jewish labor in the Histadrut; cooperative and collective organizations (particularly in agriculture); and national ownership of much of the Jewish-owned land (where the employment of Arabs was prohibited). The leadership of the Yishuv (the Jewish community) also sought to secure government employment for Jewish workers at higher wages than those paid Arab workers. A partial residential segregation of the two populations also supported the functioning of separate markets.

The struggle for Jewish labor was—and remains—one of the most agonizing symptoms of the Jewish dilemma in Palestine and Israel. One the one hand, there is the commendable ideal of building a self-sufficient, nonexploitative society in contrast to the colonial model; on the other, there is determined (sometimes violent) action to enforce labor segregation along ethnic lines.

This contradiction was particularly agonizing for the socialist labor leaders. One solution lay in unionizing Arab labor; raising the wages of Arab workers was not only desirable as a social goal, it would also render them less competitive with Jewish labor. This was the position of the left and advocated to some degree by Ben-Gurion. Several proposals along this line were adopted by the Histadrut. While there were some instances of coordinated union activity, and the Histadrut was instrumental in setting up a separate Arab union, this was indeed a far cry from a joint labor front. Moreover, since it would include only Arabs who already held jobs, it could not offer a real solution to the basic issue. Thus the attitude toward Arab employment, which distinguishes the colonists of the first Aliyah (1882–1904) from those of subsequent waves of immigration, dramatized the tension between goals and values.

A dual economy emerged. Jewish agriculture, technologically superior and highly capital-intensive, bore no similarity to traditional Arab agriculture. Most of the Yishuv was urban and thoroughly European in orientation. The level of services was relatively high. There was (and still is) an excessive proportion of workers in the service sector, but the occupational structure of Jews was indeed more "normal" than in the Diaspora. Further, product per worker was twice as high and per capita product was 3.4 times larger in the Jewish than in the Arab sector.

Nevertheless, the two sectors were not completely separate. Arab employment was quite substantial in Jewish agriculture and construc-

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tion. And Arab agriculture did sell much of its produce to the Jewish sector (vegetables were cultivated for the Jewish market).

The growth rate of product in the Arab sector was quite impressive, though it was lower than in the Jewish sector. The Arab population in the coastal towns and their very small industrial sector both grew rapidly. While in the years 1936–39 the economy was affected by the Arab rebellion and ties were reduced, the Second World War greatly increased British needs, which affected both Arab and Jewish employment, income, and industrial development. This, in turn, brought about a greater measure of domestic peace and partial renewal of economic relations.

It is hard to quantify the relative economic contributions under the rule of the Mandatory government. Jacob Metzer (1982) believes that the direct flow between the sectors was not very important from the point of view of the Arabs. Advocates of the Jewish cause, starting with Theodor Herzl, pointed to the economic and social benefits that would accrue through Zionist efforts for the Arab population in Palestine. This argument was also used to support Jewish immigration and to oppose the view that the country had a limited economic capacity. Contradictions abound. Ben-Gurion, who advocated "100 percent Jewish labor," also boasted of the prosperity afforded Arab labor in Petah-Tikvah, the target of much of the struggle for Jewish labor. Similarly, pride in how the Arabs benefited did not prevent the Jewish Agency from advocating a financial system that would avoid spillovers. The desire to build a separate Jewish economy was coupled with pride in the benefits of economic ties.

No wonder that within the Zionist camp there were people (such as the members of Hashomer Hatzair and Brit Shalom) who were willing to depart from the separatist model. Their argument for a binational political solution rested partly on the advantages of economic integration. Some argued that in the long run the gaps that existed in the standards of living were untenable, and that it was the duty of the Jewish sector to be actively involved in the development of the Arab sector. As far back as 1929, Moses Beilinson wrote: "On such a soil there can grow no honest partnership or honest understanding" (see Source Notes). He advocated raising the Arabs' standards of living, education, and health, and an agrarian reform that would redistribute land among Arabs and motivate them to shift to intensive agriculture, thus also making more land available to Jews. Dr. Arthur Ruppin, who was part of both the establishment and Brit Shalom, also advocated moderation in Jewish-Arab economic relationships. He and the leftists in the labor camp objected to "100 percent Jewish labor."

It is important to note that Arab nationalism was vehemently opposed to economic relations with Jews. This took a dramatic turn during the boycott and the Arab rebellion of 1936, when terror was applied to support this policy. These efforts only bolstered the tendency toward economic self-sufficiency on the Jewish side (and led directly to the establishment of the port of Tel Aviv to free the Jews from dependence on the neighboring, old port of Jaffa).

In sum, during the Mandatory period the Jews in Palestine, without having the power of a state but engaged in the process of state-building, developed a quasi-national economy.

II: Sovereignty — the Test of Full Equality 1948–67

THE ESTABLISHMENT of the state of Israel in 1948 changed the basic scene.

(1) The Jewish state now was responsible for governing over an Arab minority.

(2) The Jews, who had been a minority in Palestine (approximately 630,000 as against 1.27 million Arabs at the end of 1947) now were the majority in part of the land. By 1950 there were only 170,000 Arabs in the state of Israel, 11 percent of the total population, and this still was about the proportion in 1967. It was brought about by three factors: high Jewish immigration, which doubled the Jewish population within three years (immigration continued at a slower pace afterward); the partition of the country excluded roughly half a million Arabs from the new state; and several hundred thousand Palestinians left the country and became refugees. While the Arabs' rate of natural increase was higher by 10 per 1,000

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than that of the Jews in 1951–52 and by 26 per 1,000 in 1960–62, Jewish immigration was large enough to overcome this imbalance. Most of the Arab population was rural. The old urban Arab centers on the coast were mostly evacuated and the inland centers (with the exception of Nazareth) remained outside the Israeli realm.

(3) The armistice line (the "Green Line") became an effective border, sealing off relationships between Israelis (both Jews and Arabs) and the rest of the Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and other parts of the Arab world.

(4) The composition of the Jewish population changed with the large immigration of Jews from Arab countries, many arriving with low levels of skills and schooling. For them, Arab labor was directly competitive.

In the early years, the state maintained market segregation between the sectors. For some time there was segregation of the trade in agricultural produce, but the longer and more serious struggle evolved over the free movement of labor. The Arab sector was governed (until 1966) by military administration, which meant restrictions on the Arabs' freedom of movement. These restrictions were enforced throughout the 1950s to regulate the entry of Arab labor and to protect the employment opportunities of Jewish immigrants. These restrictions were liberalized in 1959, but institutional separation remained in place. Throughout the 1950s, the labor exchanges in the Jewish sector were run by the Histadrut, which actively tried to protect the interests of Jewish labor. The military government was instrumental in continuing this institutional separation. State organs did not include the Arab population under their normal jurisdiction. The power of the state was also used for the acquisition of land through confiscation. (This was largely the Arab refugees' land, but in many cases the owners or their families were living in Israel.)

Over the years, even before the formal lifting of restrictions and especially since the early 1960s, about half of Israel's Arabs have been employed in the Jewish sector, and this has brought about major changes in Arab economic life. The Arabs' entry into the Jewish labor market was caused mainly by the Jewish sector's growing demand for manual labor, which increased with the upward mobility of the Jewish immigrants. And this coincided with the rapid rise of the population, the waning acreage of agricultural land in the possession of the Arab population, constraints on the size of the agricultural sector, and the decreasing employment opportunities in Arab farming. The big push toward wage labor in the Arab sector of Palestine, however, had been set off earlier, during the Second World War, sparked by the British war effort. But the shift to wage labor in the Jewish sector as a permanent mode of livelihood was a new phenomenon. And gradually, Arab wage levels moved up toward Jewish wages for comparable skills, contributing to a rapid increase in Arab incomes and standards of living.

Thus a large proportion of Arabs (particularly the younger generation) established an employee-employer relationship with Jews, often worked among Jewish workers, and depended directly for their livelihood on the Jewish sector. They also spent much of their time in Jewish surroundings. Full migration was rare and most workers were commuters. The presence in Jewish settlements of Arab migrant workers did occasionally give rise to some unpleasant social conflicts.

The occupational and industrial structure of Arab employment was very distinct. Initially, almost half of the Arabs worked in agriculture and very few in the service sector, while Jews were more heavily concentrated in services and industry. Thus Arabs occupied positions at the lower end of the occupational scale and were most vulnerable to fluctuations in employment —which was most glaring in the economic slowdown of 1965–67.

Over the years, the occupational structure of Jews and non-Jews underwent important changes. Particularly relevant for the Arabs was the sharp decline in the number of workers in agriculture and their shift into construction. More Arabs now worked in public-service jobs, presumably reflecting increased employment of Arabs in educational and health facilities serving the Arab population. However, there do remain striking differences in the occupational structure of Jews and Arabs. And while

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the difference between the Jews from Asia and Africa (the Orientals) and other Israeli Jews has diminished over the years, the gap between Arabs and Jews from Asia and Africa (the two groups were originally closer in terms of their occupational structure) has widened.

The relative numbers of Jews and Arabs were such that this market integration could not seriously distort the Jewish occupational structure. The total of Arab workers (in *both* the Jewish and the Arab sectors) constituted approximately 8 percent of all workers in the Israeli economy; in agriculture they were about a quarter of the total work force—while in the Jewish agricultural sector they were approximately 12 percent of all workers. Small as these numbers are, relatively, they do cloud the image Zionism had of itself—surely not that of a class structure along ethnic lines!

What happened in terms of institutional integration? With the abolition of the military regime the road was paved to the absorption of the Arabs into the general institutional system. The Histadrut opened its doors to Arab workers and government offices acted more responsibly toward the Arab population. Yet this process did not end in full integration and equality. On the basis of the specific prestate Jewish organs, and with persistent residential segregation, the public sector has given different treatment to the two communities. Arabs do not serve in the army. By itself this is a significant advantage for Arab youth. But turn the coin: certain state subsidies and transfers (child allowances, housing, university fees, and more) are associated with army service and are differentially granted to Jews and Arabs.

In a socially and economically integrated society the Arabs in Israel would have been marked for special treatment, being disadvantaged, lagging in public services, and so on. In reality, however, the Arab economic sector has not been an object of concern. Several Arab-Israeli wars and continuing conflict have put the Israeli Arabs into a difficult position. Obviously, in such a situation legitimate security considerations interfere with smooth integration; and these considerations can also be abused. Unhappily, in a situation without peace, the standard of full integration and equality has proved hard to attain.

III: Greater Israel — Free Trade, Institutional Segregation, and Political Domination

THE 1967 WAR was another *major* watershed. All the territory of the British Mandate (and more) came under Israeli rule and so did a population of approximately 1 million Arabs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Greater Israel, since 1967, is approximately 35 percent Arab, with a much higher natural increase in the Arab population (about 30 per 1,000) than among the Jews. Because of sluggish immigration of Jews to Israel and a significant emigration of Jews, the proportion of Arabs in the state of Israel proper, within the Green Line, has increased, but the proportion of Arabs in Greater Israel has remained stable, because Arabs emigrated from the occupied territories, balancing the rate of natural increase. (The rate of emigration was 4.4 per 1,000 in 1969–70 and 16.5 per 1,000 in 1974–75 through 1978–80; see Miron, 1982.)

Except for East Jerusalem, which was annexed, the rest of the West Bank and Gaza were occupied territories, raising again the question of economic ties. Israel chose free trade with few limitations. The Israeli currency became legal tender in the territories. Limitations on the entry of Arab labor and agricultural produce were enforced only for a short time and, in fact, goods and services are traded freely between the sectors.

This free trade has been a great blessing to the territories, and more so for their economies than for the Israeli economy. Roughly four-fifths of all outside trade of the territories is with Israel, with per capita GNP rising at 12 percent in 1969–70 and 1974–75 and at 5 percent annually over the span of the decade 1970–80. Roughly one-third of the workers in the occupied territories have entered the Israeli labor market. Their incomes accounted for a fifth of their GNP. Together with remittances from emigrants, this was also the driving force behind the growth of the territories' domestic economies.

In the state of Israel, the workers from the territories are primarily manual workers, and 80 percent of them work in construction, agriculture, and industry, compared to three-fifths

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of the Israeli Arabs who work in the Jewish economy. Only 35 percent of the Jewish population works in these three industries. In 1980, a quarter of all workers in Greater Israel were Arab. In agriculture and in construction, the Arabs make up more than half of the work force. In the state of Israel proper, Israeli Arabs, supplemented by those from the territories, add up to 15 percent of the total work force—a third of all workers in agriculture and more than half in construction.

This division of labor is not a transitional stage on the way to an ethnically undifferentiated society. It is a consequence of economic and political realities. Until 1967 the West Bank was the backwater of the Jordanian kingdom. Most of the development effort in Jordan was focused on the East Bank; the West Bank was an area of outmigration. Since 1967, with the West Bank a formally occupied territory, there has been little concern for the economic growth of the domestic economy as an independent unit, and outmigration has continued. The authorities did pay attention to agriculture, where efforts were made to improve efficiency and introduce technological change, while designing a division of labor that would reduce competition with Israeli agriculture. It is in fact manual labor that is most in demand in Israel, and the skilled and better educated work force has to make do with relatively lower earnings or migrate. This has far-reaching implications, affecting the distribution of income, the future course of manpower development, and the composition of the Palestinian population compared to the Palestinian diaspora.

Economic relations thus commence within a dual institutional framework based on asymmetrical political power. The institutional structure and the public sector of the occupied territories is kept separate from that of Israel, and it reflects the military status of the territories. This arrangement is part of the protection that international law provides for the preservation of the institutions of the permanent government when occupation is considered to be a transitory stage. But as occupation persists and official Israeli policy opposes any form of repartition, this institutional separation has to be seen in a new light. This has been underlined since 1981 with the attempt to create the Civil Administration in the territories, which is to replace what was to have been transitory military rule. And still more important is the Israeli settlement effort. Jews who settle in the West Bank live partly under Israeli law, are heavily subsidized on an individual basis, and enjoy a system of services fully integrated with those in the state of Israel proper—and completely separate from those supplied to the territories' Arab population.

Asymmetry is also present in the trade relationships. Arab labor does not have the union protection that Jewish labor enjoys. This may be reflected in such phenomena as work obtained through labor contractors, inferior social benefits, longer hours, and vulnerability to discharge on arbitrary or economic grounds.

Asymmetry indeed is even more glaring in the case of property rights. Israeli authorities control all state lands and use them mostly for Jewish settlement. The notion that state lands are a reservoir for the needs of the local population is no longer operative. Moreover, because a large part of the Arab-owned land is neither settled nor cultivated, the authorities have been able to facilitate appropriation of such property from individual owners. Thus political domination has sometimes been used to strip Arabs in the occupied territories of collective or individual property rights. (Meron Benvenisti provides extensive research and analysis on this and related topics; see Source Notes.)

While the context is political, real economic interests are at stake. The real estate added to the hinterland of Israel's congested coastal plain is an attraction both for the government and for individuals. The opportunity to use labor that is not properly unionized, and that can be controlled easily (up to discharge) because of its unprotected, inferior status, is a very important temptation. As S. M. Lipset wrote (see Source Notes), "Having people who cannot vote to do all your dirty work is the easiest solution of the problem of inequality for any politician, whether left, right, or center."

We saw in the three periods three "ideal types" of economic relations between Jews and Arabs, though not fully attained: in the British Mandate period an ideal of separation; in "smaller" Israel an ideal of equality; in Greater

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Israel free trade but distinct and asymmetric institutional structures, with Jewish supremacy.

IV: The Fourth Alternative — Is a Jewish Binational State Feasible?

THE SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES, however influenced by past history, must be guided by one's values. The economic and social regime that is being developed in the occupied territories does not conform to the original and fundamental concept of a Jewish state.

Is a formal annexation of the territories a solution? Even if it were feasible, a binational state with an Arab minority of 35 percent (assuming it does not increase) cannot retain its Jewish character in the dual sense in which we defined it. True, formal annexation would make discrimination more difficult and provide more protection for individuals. But it cannot translate into the kind of social structure that will resemble anything that an enlightened Jew could regard as satisfactory. It certainly will not mirror the dreams and predictions of the prestate Zionist leaders. Given the great differences in income, the extension of equal, let alone equalizing, public treatment will be enormously costly. Given such costs, and given what we have learned from the experience of the small Arab minority in Israel, the achievement of real integration and equality is extremely unlikely.

It is not easy to visualize complete isolation under conditions of peace. But we can ask: if complete economic separation of the sort that prevailed before 1967 were feasible, should we want it? The Israeli economy could adjust to such separation; the economic loss to the Arabs of the territories, however, would be appreciable. For an economist who sees the mutual benefit of trade, who observes the degree to which the economies have become interwoven, this is not the best solution, nor is it clearly feasible.

The preferred economic relationship that would be consistent with the concept of a Jewish homeland would combine trade and cooperation with political and institutional symmetry. Free trade and free movement of labor can be mutually beneficial. The concern with the occupational structure of the Jewish people in its original version has become anachronistic. There is no reason to place Jews in jobs now filled by Arabs. Without this supply of Arab labor, many of these jobs probably would have been eliminated through capital-intensive methods of production. (For example, the capital intensity of the construction industry in Israel has lagged behind other sectors since 1967.) The disturbing aspects are the social relations that surround economic transactions. Class and ethnicity converge: employer-employee, buyer-and-seller relations are associated with political domination.

Unilateral benevolence is not a good enough guarantee against the misuse of power in such a context. Only the existence of a countervailing power could reverse the patterns that we observe now. Only an Arab political entity will have a real interest in the economic welfare of the Palestinian population. Such a sovereign entity could protect the private and collective property rights of the population, devise a trade policy, and tilt economic development in a direction that will serve this population and make it less dependent on the Israeli economy. Ideally, such a political entity would cooperate with Israel both on issues of development and in the regulation of trade. But, of course, political independence could lead to severance of economic ties and isolation.

The political and institutional balance is necessary if Jews and Arabs are to reap the benefits of close and cooperative economic ties and to avoid, or at least mitigate, the social and moral implications of a dual system.

One should not take the economic relations between Jews and Arabs out of their context. The continued strife and bloodshed, the persistent rejection of Jewish statehood by the Palestinians and their own reduction from a majority to a minority fearful of dispossession, all these create close to irreversible facts, attitudes, fears. Against this background the ideal of a large democratic homogenized country in which Jews and Arabs will shed their separate national identities and aspirations is ludicrous and not sincerely desired by either side. True, against this background the Jewish state in its ideal form is also unattainable; but a good,

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pragmatic approximation is possible. Only a political formula of partition, in which Arabs under an Arab flag have a political entity that protects their interests, will allow the emergence of economic and social relations that are consistent with the idea of a Jewish state.

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THE EDITORS □

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Gus Tyler

What Do Unions Really Do?

Scholars Discover What Many Workers Know

What do unions do? They cause inflation, unemployment, low productivity, and inequality. Hence, what they do is bad.

How? The high wages that unions impose cause inflation. The same high wages discourage employers from hiring workers, thereby causing unemployment. Union work rules interfere with efficiency and productivity. By dividing the working class into two groups—the unionized with their high wages and the nonunionized with their low wages—unions perpetuate and promote inequality. Hence unions are bad for most workers and for the society as a whole.

This description of the union as a malevolent creature, a "special interest" serving a greedy few at the expense of the rest of society, is not simply the stock-in-trade of some politicians but has also become a kind of professorial pap. The "empirical" evidence, as gathered by econometricians and processed by their cool computers, is so abundant at the moment that the various conclusions about the antisocial impact of unions is, by now, almost a "given."

For those who intuitively disagree with these conclusions—or assumptions—but who do not have the time or arcane vocabulary to refute the quantified "findings" of those learned economists, a little book by Richard B. Freeman and James L. Medoff entitled *What Do Unions Do?** will come as welcome relief. The authors say that what pap prattling says about unions just ain't so. Both authors have the necessary credentials: they are at Harvard. And they display the required diligence: they spent ten years on the research. They present their case with great gobs of data fed into computers programmed for modeling. Fortunately, they write in comprehensible English.

- *On unemployment:* "Unions affect neither the total amount of labor adjustment to the business cycle nor the aggregate level of unemployment."
- *On inflation:* "There is no evidence that union wage gains are a major factor in the inflation of the 1970s."
- *On productivity:* "The new quantitative studies indicate that productivity is generally higher in unionized establishments than in otherwise comparable establishments that are nonunion."
- *On equality:* "On the basis of the new empirical research, it appears that trade unionism in the United States reduces inequality by about 3 percent."

These conclusions will be challenged, of course, since it is now empirically proven that computers have social and political biases. Once you know the bent of the electronic brain, you can foretell the result. But it is heartening to know that people who have access to a big computer can do regression analysis, have access to millions of pieces of data, and devote themselves to a project for ten years have concluded from "quantitative studies" that unions are not the root of our economic ills.

The unfortunate thing is that academics have so distorted obvious truths that it takes other academics to open a dialogue from which simple verities may once more emerge, verities that can be far better perceived by the application of natural rather than artificial intelligence. Consider, for instance, each of the ma-

* Richard B. Freeman and James L. Medoff, *What Do Unions Do?* New York: Basic Books, 1984; 293 pp., $22.95.

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jor questions of unemployment, inflation, productivity, and inequality.

Employment

A MARKET ECONOMY—which capitalism is—requires a market. In the United States, the biggest part of that market, by far, is made up of families that live on wages and salaries. If their earnings are steady and high, the market is strong; if their wages are low and unsteady, the market is weak. That is why capitalism—quintessentially a market economy—requires high employment and high wages. Without them, the market economy is marketless.

Yet, irony of ironies, high wages are exactly what capitalists don't want. They see high wages as cutting into their profits and they see high employment—a tight labor market—as the cause of high wages. They prefer—indeed, demand—a loose labor market and low wages.

This insistence on the part of the capitalist to keep wages down to as low a level as possible was noted centuries ago by Adam Smith himself. "Masters are always and everywhere," he wrote, "in a tacit, but constant and uniform combination, not to raise the wages above their natural level. . . . Masters too sometimes enter into particular combinations to sink the wages of labor even below this rate." To Adam Smith, the "natural rate" was determined basically, with slight variations, by the "iron law of wages." Workers would be paid just enough to keep them alive and to raise another generation of workers who would again be paid just enough to keep them alive *et ad infinitum.* Workers were viewed as workers—not consumers.

Here is what a good old-fashioned dialectician would call a "contradiction of capitalism." The "ism" needs high wages; the "ist" wants low wages. Left in the hands of the capitalist, capitalism would be starved to death for want of a market.

For a couple of centuries—actually both before and after Adam Smith (1776)—economists agonized over this all too apparent contradiction. What were the capitalists to do with their capital as they saw their goods turn to glut in a nation where consumption was weak because wages were low? The solution: invest the capital overseas—a passing ploy at best until the moment when "overseas" presented the same problem as the home market.

While capitalists then were busy digging their own graves, working people were busy infusing the "system" with adrenalin—in the form of "unnatural" wages—namely, wages above what their bosses deemed "natural." Adam Smith knew about this too. "The workmen desire to get as much, the masters to give as little, as possible. The former are disposed to combine in order to raise wages, the latter in order to lower the wages of labor."

But Adam Smith had no faith whatever that labor would prevail. The masters must, "upon all ordinary occasions, have the advantage in the dispute and force the other into a compliance with their terms." This is all spelled out in Chapter Eight of *The Wealth of Nations*, where Smith points to the superior economic and political power of the masters: they would always hold wages down to the subsistence level.

Smith was fundamentally correct, but not quite as correct as he thought. He was writing in pre-Chartist England, before the common people had the vote. He was describing the power of unions in their infancy. Over the next two centuries, unions broke the iron law of wages. They lifted their wages well above the mystical "natural" level. They multiplied their presence as consumers; and so they made a market for the market economy.

It was Daniel DeLeon, that dogmatic pure socialist, who saw in this process a betrayal of the revolutionary purpose. To DeLeon, the labor leaders, accumulating tiny incremental gains for the proletariat, were "labor fakirs." The worker with a half loaf would never be hungry enough to grab for the whole loaf. "Reform," said DeLeon, "is chloroform."

As labor moved into politics, elected officials occasionally rearranged the national income through legislation that further enlarged aggregate demand. They did this even before Keynes. When some of them discovered Sir John's prescription, they took the elixir in great gulps—undisturbed by the realization that Keynes had concocted the medicine to aid capitalism, not to abolish it.

Natural intelligence informs us that unions,

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by expanding aggregate demand, are the *primum mobile* of employment. Proof? Try cutting wages in half and see what your computer tells you about unemployment in America—or any place else that has a market economy!

Inflation

THERE IS A DOUBLE ASSUMPTION underlying the "received maxim" that high wages are the main cause of inflation. The first assumption is that wages are the sole or the major cost of production; the second assumption is that a higher wage automatically adds to the cost of production.

Both assumptions are invalid. Wages are but one of the costs of production; others are land, building, machinery, raw material, supervisory personnel, profits, interest, taxes. In many sectors of the economy, the cost of wages is by far outweighed by the other factors. For instance, a breakdown of costs in auto production in Detroit shows about 75 percent going to "fixed costs," which include everything but labor and raw materials; only about 12 percent goes for labor. Econometricians will argue over the numbers, but however the numbers are juggled, labor will end up as only a portion of costs, and a relatively small portion at that.

The common answer to this is that "wages and salaries" make up about 60 percent of all personal income in the United States. The implication here is that "wages and salaries" must, therefore, make up 60 percent of all costs. This "received maxim" (Adam Smith's phrase) is the stock-in-trade of all those who equate wages with costs.

But the maxim is very mushy. The phrase—wages and salaries—includes the 25 top corporate executives who, in 1983, received more than $2 million apiece in salaries and bonuses. One of these, William Anderson, chairman of National Cash Register, headed the list with $13.2 million; he "earned" more than did 1,300 garment workers, combined. At GM alone, five executives received *bonuses* of more than $1 million apiece and 5,800 managers received *bonuses* averaging more than $35,000 apiece. Obviously, the inclusion of executive salaries with all other "wages and salaries" totally overstates the amount going to run-of-the-mill employees.

The real mushiness is to be found in the kind of income included in the official statistics. It is limited to "personal income."

But not all income is "personal." Corporations have income that is not necessarily distributed to persons in the form of dividends or interest but is retained in the corporate coffers. Governments have income derived from taxes. Arab sheiks have income from money invested in the United States; they also have income from oil sold here.

If costs to the society are equated with income, then all income should be included, such as income to government, to corporations, to foreign investors, to oil suppliers and the like, since all these represent costs to consumers. Income should not be limited to the "personal" income of American residents. In addition, executive salaries should be excluded from calculations of the income of workers. By such a recalculation, labor's income would be far less than half the income of the country.

The second assumption—high wages must mean high prices—is also invalid. It is possible for wages to rise and for prices not to rise, even to fall. If wages double but output doubles, then prices need not rise at all. In more formal terms, if productivity increases as wages increase, prices will remain constant. (Very shortly, we will address ourselves to the historic role of unions in raising productivity—a sadly neglected subject.)

The fiction that inflation is caused by high wages is not a recent one. Way back in 1776, Adam Smith attributed this fallacy to employers who wanted to blame high prices on wages rather than on other factors—like their own profits:

> In reality [Smith wrote], high profits tend much more to raise the price of work than high wages. . . . Our merchants and master-manufacturers complain much of the bad effects of high wages in raising the price. . . . They say nothing concerning the bad effects of high profits. They are silent with respect to the pernicious effects of their own gains. They complain only of those of other people.

Adam Smith had two reasons—both very commonsensical—for concluding that the mas-

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ters rather than the workers were responsible for inflation. The first reason was mathematical; the second behavioral.

Mathematically, Smith reasoned that when a product goes through stages of production from raw material to finished commodity, wage increases at every stage of production would merely add up to an arithmetic sum—like "simple interest." But when masters attach a percentage to costs to realize their profits, they add to costs at a geometric rate—like "compound interest." And anyone who knows the difference between simple and compound interest knows that the latter adds up many times faster than the former.

Smith's "behavioral" argument was his observation that "people of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices."

About two centuries later, Dr. Arthur F. Burns, then running the Federal Reserve Board, came to the same conclusion as Smith —although adjusting the "conspiracy" theory to the more subtle style of our modern economy. Burns spoke out of frustration bordering on fury in the 1970s, when he found that his efforts to check inflation by high interest rates and massive dosages of unemployment were not slowing price escalation. He concluded that his enemy was "monopoly," which he described more euphemistically as "concentration":

> In the concentrated industries [recorded Burns, a Nixon appointee], energy up 11 percent; transportation equipment up 9 percent; metals and metal products up 8 percent; machinery and equipment up 7 percent; nonmetallic minerals up 6 percent; and rubber and plastic products up 5 percent. Meanwhile, in the less concentrated industries, such as processed foods, skins, leathers and hides, and textile products and apparel, price changes were below average, at about 2 percent.

The conclusion is clear: where competition exists in industry, inflation is nearly nonexistent; where there is concentration of ownership (Smith's "conspiracy"), inflation runs rampant. There is a perverse pattern in Burns's description of the differing rates of inflation in the different sectors of the economy. In the labor-intensive sector, where wages are a high percentage of unit costs, inflation is low; in the capital-intensive sector, where wages are a low percentage of unit costs, the inflation rate is high. How come?

Obviously, the differing rates of inflation cannot be traced to labor. The difference lies in the fact that the labor-intensive sector, with its low capital requirements, is highly competitive while the capital-intensive sector, with its prohibitive capital prerequisites, is highly concentrated. As Adam Smith would have suggested: where it was easy to conspire they did so; where it was difficult to conspire they didn't.

This perverse pattern is painfully evident in those sectors of the economy that have been primarily responsible for our recent inflation: fuel, food, housing, and health care. The rate of inflation in these sectors has been about double that of commodities that were not necessities. Also, these Four Horsemen of Inflation make up about two-thirds of the budget of the median family and much more of the budget of families below the mid-line. Yet labor costs are a minor factor in all four of these areas.

The labor content in a gallon of gasoline is several pennies: the unconscionable rise in the price of oil was the work of OPEC—not of any union. Little labor goes into food, a heavily capital-intensive industry: food prices are high because the government spends billions annually to keep agricultural products off the market in order to maintain high prices. In the building industry, the cost of labor as a percentage of total cost in home-building has been cut in half in the last three decades; meanwhile, the cost of land and financing has multiplied several times over. Although there is greater labor input in health care than in the other three sectors, wage increases lag far behind the increased costs of physicians' fees, of sophisticated equipment, and malpractice insurance. In short, the high prices of fuel, food, housing, and health care are not logically attributable to the wages of oil workers, farm hands, carpenters, or hospital attendants.

All that talk about the high cost of labor serves one purpose: it drowns out any talk about the high cost of capital. Yet the high cost of capital has been an inflationary factor of

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major proportions as capital-intensive companies pass on the cost of capital to the consumer.

In a 1983 study Dr. George Hatsopoulos, chairman of the high-tech Thermo Electron Corporation and a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, writes that "since 1973, the cost of capital services has increased relative to the cost of labor by more than 20 percent." This jump in capital costs is doubly inflationary. First, the cost is added directly to price. Second, the high cost of capital has curbed productivity because "as capital becomes more costly relative to labor, firms will tend to forgo investments needed to boost labor productivity."

If all of the foregoing has been more confusing than clarifying, here is a simple test to find out whether labor has been responsible for inflation. As productivity (output per worker hour) has risen, has the real wage (money wage adjusted to inflation and taxes) risen? The answer is, no! Between 1970 and 1980, output per worker hour in the United States rose by about 20 percent. So, if the worker were getting a fair share of that increased output, he or she should be living about 20 percent better. But no: worker real wage—disposable income—has fallen steadily in that decade. In plain language, the average worker produces more and ends up with less.

To blame labor for inflation is another one of those instances where the victim is accused of the crime—usually by one of the real culprits.

Productivity

FIRST, A FACT: productivity (output per worker hour) in the United States for the economy as a whole is by far the highest in the world. In some sectors, other countries surpass the United States. Some countries are catching up. But for the economy as a whole, Uncle Sam is still the front-runner.

Second, another fact: The U.S. has been able to achieve its high productivity (output per worker hour) because it has historically been a high-wage country, thanks in no small degree to militant unions.

For employers to put time and money into improving their technology (labor-saving devices, automation, computerization), they must have an incentive.

Historically, in this country, they usually have had a double incentive. First, the relatively high wages in the United States provided a market for mass manufacture with all the savings inherent in large-scale production. Without such a mass market it would not pay management to make large investments in costly machinery: there wouldn't be enough customers making purchases to recoup the investment and to make a profit. Second, high wages spurred management to find more efficient methods of production so that the output of the highly paid worker would increase, to hold down unit costs.

To make the point again in bold relief: imagine an America where the wage is as low as in present China (16 cents an hour in the apparel industry). Who would provide the market for mass production? What need to introduce expensive machinery when labor is so cheap?

High wages have provided the market and the compulsion to heighten productivity. But that was not enough. There was the need for a reservoir of talent in the nation, a pool of trained brains, to do the research, development, application. And such a pool of skills was available at an early time in the United States because of public schooling at the elementary, secondary, trade, and college levels—a development that was fostered in America from the 1820s down to the present by the active political push of organized labor.

But high productivity requires more than skilled persons at the inventive and operative levels, and more than cleverly designed machines. High productivity requires maximum usage of productive facilities. When the economy goes slack, productivity falls because there is, of necessity, much idle manpower at all levels, especially at the supervisory and maintenance level. Indeed, productivity varies from quarter to quarter and sometimes from month to month, often quite dramatically—a phenomenon that cannot be explained by changes in worker traits or in technology, for neither of these leaps up and down in such short time spans. The zig-zag productivity graph reflects how busy or slow the economy is in the corresponding time period.

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Maintaining a vigorous overall economy by maintaining adequate buying power is, as we have noted, a prime function of unions. And to the extent that they succeed in doing so, whether by collective bargaining or political action, unions provide the macrocondition to maximize productivity.

Econometric studies that show unionized plants to be more productive than nonunion facilities help to refute the argument that union work rules constrict output. But such findings, though worthwhile, don't disclose labor's true impact on productivity, namely, the historic dynamics emanating from the labor movement's persistent push to achieve high wages, widespread education, and full employment—the mainstays of progress in productivity.

Equality

ONE CAN ASSERT, with minimal research, that there was greater equality in the preunion era: everybody got "starvation wages." The "iron law" had everyone entrapped. As unions organized to bend or break the "iron law," not all workers moved out of the cage at the same time or at the same speed or to the same degree: some did well and others less well. Just about all did better not only for themselves but for the unorganized too, who enjoyed the indirect benefits of unionization. So, if the question is whether or not unions have made for greater equality or inequality among workers today as contrasted with the days when unions did not exist in any meaningful way, then it must be concluded that unions have promoted inequality—a highly beneficent inequality, by which just about all workers were able to rise from the level of the inert to some level of life, albeit not to the same extent.

An appropriate parallel is the abolition of black slavery in the United States. Prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves enjoyed "equality," with a few favorable exceptions for domestics and other "privileged" few. After the liberation, inequality set in as some ex-slaves or their children became undertakers, doctors, and bankers, while others dug ditches or assembled cars.

Unions liberated nonunion workers, along with dues-paying members, from the iron cage. First, by expanding the economy through expanded aggregate demand, the unions created a tighter labor market: this meant that the unorganized could demand more for their labor—union or nonunion. Second, to compete with the union employers for workers, nonunion employers had to offer comparable wages and conditions. Third, to ward off union-organizing drives, employers had to volunteer a reasonable facsimile of union wages, fringes, and so on.

But the unions did most for the nonunion worker through legislation, enacted and improved over the years through the efforts of organized labor in politics. The minimum-wage and maximum-hour law puts a floor under the earnings of the nonunionized. These non-dues-payers are also the beneficiaries of workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, Social Security, occupational safety and health laws, Medicaid, Medicare, Food Stamps, rent supplements, equal-employment opportunities, low-income housing, the Davis-Bacon Act, and so on.

The real question is not whether some workers who are organized in high-paying trades are living much better than other workers who are unorganized and work in poorly paying trades, although this *is* a serious matter that deserves the attention of both the labor movement and the total society. In judging the role of unions in our society the more crucial question is how workers live today, including those in the least favored positions, as compared with how such workers lived before there were unions—or how they would be living today if unions in America had not so profoundly affected the total economy through collective bargaining and political action. To ask the question in this way, of course, is to answer it.

Most unfortunately, in a discussion of "equality" as a desirable trait of a social order, the econometricians are contorted by their methodology into asking the wrong question. Because they are obliged to quantify everything, they must ask questions that have quantitative answers. But the great contribution of unions to the democratic ideal has not been quantitative but qualitative. The important

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"equality" has been less economic than political.

The workplace is a political entity that can be run dictatorially or democratically, brutally or humanely, through terror or mutual respect. What unions do above all is to give the worker a voice, a say over his or her own destiny as a worker. The worker can talk back to the boss without fear of being fired; the worker can tell her foreman to keep his hands in his pocket and off her butt; the worker can feel like a human being and not just a hunk of fearful flesh.

Again, the parallel with the emancipation of the slaves is appropriate. Liberation meant, first of all, liberation. It did not guarantee that the ex-slaves would enjoy greater economic security or income; indeed, for many of the liberated, liberation at first was a disaster: they no longer had a master who would take care of them because they represented a capital investment. Likewise, unionism, in the first place, recognizes the equality of the worker with the boss—not economically, but as a human being—a concept that is at the core of a free society.

Once the worker is liberated, wins "recognition," has job security, he or she then uses that freedom to do something about wages, hours, working conditions. The economic gains are a result of the political change in the occupational power structure.

FREEDOM—like love—is not quantifiable. And because it is not, the econometric methodology has no way of evaluating the single most important thing that unions do.

In their work on unions, Medoff and Freeman do a yeomanlike job with their econometric tools. Unfortunately, the tools are limited. The skills of the historian, the macroeconomist, and the political scientist are needed to present a fuller answer to the question: What Do Unions Do? In that context the Medoff-Freeman book would be a solid tile in a larger mosaic. □

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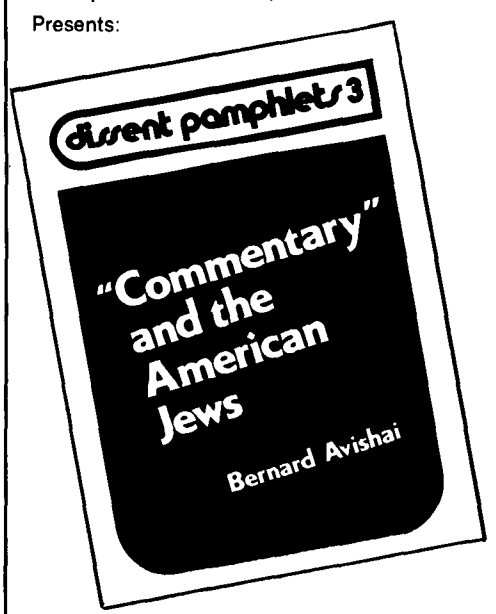

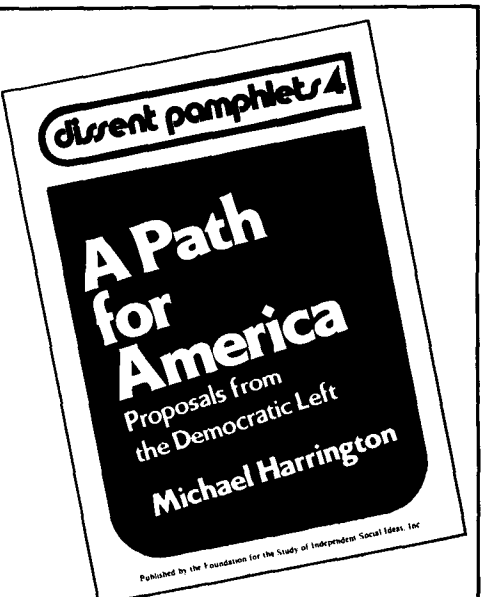
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Communitarianism & the Left

A Discussion

1. A Statement by Harry C. Boyte

> "Our whole mode of thinking must be turned upside down. Instead of imitating most other political theories and adopting the state as the primary structure and then adapting the activity of the citizen to the state, democratic thinking should renounce the state paradigm [and instead define] the citizen as a person whose existence is located in a particular place and draws its sustenance from circumscribed relationships: family, friends, church, neighborhood, workplace, community, town, city. . . . "
>
> — Sheldon Wolin, "Revolutionary Action Today," *democracy*, Fall 1982

We live in what historian Lawrence Goodwyn has called "an age of sophisticated despair."[1] Centralized corporate structures and the modern bureaucratic state acquire an eerie life of their own, take on autonomous power in much the same sense that Marx once described the machinery that defined the pace, rhythm, and structure of workers' lives. And the pessimism that forms a background for contemporary political discussion is magnified by current developments—Reaganism, the deadly momentum of the arms race, and so on. There is a sense that classic leftist approaches offer little prospect for mobilizing the passion and imagination that can significantly transform technological tyranny and political and economic centralization.

Against such a backdrop, the very definition of politics tends to become electoral reformism. In 1984, the institutions of the liberal left have embarked upon a variety of voter registration efforts and other campaigns designed to defeat Ronald Reagan in the November election. Socialists join in such endeavors, hoping to gain credibility and visibility.

Concern about the upcoming election is amply justified. But a "politics" of the left that equates radicalism with electoral involvement is self-defeating. It reproduces the tone of defensiveness now widespread in conventional liberal dicussion. It abandons the intellectual and activist functions that have characterized the best moments of democratic radicalism: the generation of longer-range visions, ideas, and strategies for moving toward a more humane and democratic destination.

The question is how to broaden our conception of "politics as usual," rediscover democratic resources in American cultural traditions that have been so gravely weakened in this most forgetful of societies, and develop a many-sided approach to the creation of a democratic movement. Skillful interventions in electoral politics and other public arenas are useful in this task. But we must learn to distinguish between such activities—which at best pursue narrow instrumental goals—and the core values of the movement and society we seek to create. Such a challenge, in turn, will require the rethinking of basic axioms on the left, the development of new, pluralist forms of radical democratic organization, and the articulation of an idiom of democratic change more varied and rooted in dissenting American traditions than "democratic socialism."

On the face of it, the problem facing the democratic left is simply stated. A remarkable irony suggests an immense vacuum in American politics. Mainstream Democrats have all but abandoned the tepidly critical stance of traditional liberalism toward corporate power. The Senate Democratic Task Force on the economy now urges "abandonment" of the "tradition . . . that state power should be used to counterbalance corporate power" and

[1] Lawrence Goodwyn, "A Democratic Awakening," *New Republic*, March 14, 1981, p. 36.

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argues instead for "making government an ally of business." Yet according to the Harris poll of March 1983, the number of Americans who believe "the rich get richer and the poor poorer" has steadily increased, rising to 79 percent in 1983. The percentage of people agreeing that "the people running the country don't really care what happens" to ordinary citizens, 26 percent in 1966, stands today at 57 percent.[2]

Conventional liberal-left approaches cannot speak to this sort of alienation because they draw too heavily on the vocabulary of the bureaucratic state system from which people feel estranged. Even in the best of electoral campaigns, the candidate is necessarily the focus—and American elections place a premium on candidate "packaging" and media imagery. The life of complex communities easily becomes flattened and instrumentalized: people are turned into categories to be appealed to in "issue" terms—that is, terms of partial identities. And the themes of progressive campaigns focus narrowly on what government (and the candidate) might do for particular constituencies.

Both the understanding of political agency (voting blocs and electoral coalitions) and the terminology of power become abstract and depersonalized. Discussion of deep values or the possibility of qualitatively *different* ways of living is an extraordinary rarity. And even when an occasional candidate adopts a more visionary idiom, electoral campaigns cannot build the sort of enduring community through which people actually begin to experience democratic modes of behavior. Put very simply, the values of electoral politics are different from the values of substantive, communally grounded democracy.

The democratic movements that have wrought major changes in the contemporary world have drawn their inspiration from sources that differ from electoral politics and have found their major expression in different forums. In the civil rights struggle, for instance, the movement gained its power from religious and democratic values that came alive in hundreds of towns and cities where ordinary men and women acquired for periods of time a stunning solidarity through the transformation of their communities. Black pulpits, freedom schools, songs, and other channels—not the mass media or the halls of Congress—were the instruments of cultural revitalization.

The civil rights movement had an impact on the political process and at times used it adroitly. But ultimately the understanding of power and democracy articulated by someone like Martin Luther King, Jr., was different. The acts leading *up* to the voting booth were the ones that constituted the most important forms of "democracy in action" through which people learned a "new sense of somebodyness" and the practical skills of democracy. King's biblical perspective on power appreciated the transformative force of "redemptive suffering," the healing effects of love, the ambiguity in every community and individual.

This sensibility has spread over the past decade through a range of local activity. It can be seen in many neighborhood and citizen efforts, whose rapid growth has recently been reported in the national media. It is also visible in the community base of the new peace movement, in women's self-help projects, in cooperatives and other efforts. At their most skillful, labor-union campaigns against the corporate offensive have tapped this spirit. When Gulf & Western sought to force concessions from the UE local in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1982, the union went on the offensive. Showing how the conglomerate had bought out the locally owned machine-tool plant for the sake of "bleeding off" profits and eventually shutting it down, the union mobilized an array of community institutions—churches, businesses, and civic groups—around a call for local self-determination and civic vitality. The company was forced on the defensive and eventually granted gains to the union.[3]

Through this sort of grass-roots ferment, a different, older and more participatory understanding of "democracy" develops. Democracy seems real only when ordinary people develop a sense of communal responsibility and engage in a continuing civic action, learning the skills and values of public life, building the tools to gain political power.[4]

Moreover, what is often called "value-based" organizing has developed such insights further,

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[2] Senate Task Force, quoted in Maurice Zeitlin, "Democratic Investment," *democracy*, April 1982, p. 70. The Harris poll figures are from *USA Today*, March 17, 1983. Public alienation is also charted in the Gallup-poll figures, *Minneapolis Tribune*, Sept. 11, 1983.

[3] The New Bedford fight is described in Dan Swinney, "U.E. Local 277's Strike at Morse Cutting Tool," *Labor Research Review*, Fall 1982.

[4] On earlier participatory democratic views, see, for example, Charles Douglas Lummis, "The Radicalism of Democracy," *democracy*, Fall 1982, pp. 9–16; C. B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Sheldon Wolin, "The People's Two Bodies," *democracy*, January 1981, pp. 9–24.

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adapting participatory understanding of democracy to the dilemmas of modern culture by recognizing as problematic such terms as "community," "tradition," and "public life." Traditionally, community organizing and citizen action have taken little notice of questions of value. Community organizations have used a wry and cynical idiom much like other forms of interest-group politics. Yet in recent years such groups as the Communities Organized for Public Service in San Antonio, the San Francisco Organizing Project, the East Brooklyn Churches have stressed the need to link work on particular issues with extensive processes of community renewal, value discussion, and "citizenship education."

This sharply poses the difference between communitarian values on the one hand—participation, the dignity of the person, reconciliation, identification with the powerless, justice—and the "values of the world" on the other—profit, unbridled individualism, glorification of technique. Such groups intervene in the political process using tools of coalition building, mass action, voter registration, and so forth. Indeed, it is estimated that COPS in San Antonio has redirected over $400 million in development funds into poor Mexican barrios over its ten-year history. In the process it has mounted a challenge to local political and economic elites that is unprecedented in recent years and inspired a number of similar groups. COPS, according to Ernesto Cortes, the group's first organizer, is "like a university where people come to learn about public policy, public discourse, and public life."

Yet COPS leaders also make a clear distinction between their view of a public life that nourishes and respects the values of families, communities, and religious institutions, and what is defined as "public" in "the world as it is." The difference is indicated by Sonia Hernandez, current COPS president, when she discusses participation: "We never talk about people in terms of 'masses,' " she explains. "We don't think in terms simply of getting out numbers of people. Each is an individual and you address people as individuals. You make sure each person has an understanding of what we are going to do and why, *and what their role is.*"[5]

This sort of approach shifts the focus of conventional liberal or left-wing politics, which views people and groups in terms of stages of consciousness ("reactionary" versus "progressive," for instance, or conservative, liberal, or left-wing), to an emphasis on values. Values are the glue of communities, evolving out of their history, purposes, and common life. Organizing that makes an affirmation of democratic values integral to its activity begins to repair bonds that have been gravely weakened by mass culture and economic pressures. It involves and promotes community leaders who are different from normal "activists": women, for instance, who frequently work behind the scenes to keep PTAs going, organize church activities, and maintain neighborhood networks. In the process of giving such invisible leaders new skills and public recognition, the very definitions of leadership and public are changed.

When a community becomes conscious of its core values in a context of pluralist discussion, democratic and transformative possibilities are more likely to be realized. The San Francisco Organizing Project, for example, using the value-based approach pioneered by COPS, has brought together a great diversity of groups: black Pentecostals, Hispanic congregations, synagogues, trade-union locals, white ethnic parishes, churches with predominantly gay and lesbian memberships, and more. Leaders in SFOP consistently remark on the depth and seriousness of the exchanges that result from combining value discussions with ongoing work on such issues as housing, jobs, pollution, crime, and the treatment of Central American refugees.

Such activities are crucial for a democratic movement in America, whose first stirrings are visible but must spread far more widely if any significant challenge to centralized corporate and bureaucratic structures is to emerge. Tasks that democratic socialist and labor parties have historically performed will be essential in such a process. No broad democratic movement can emerge with-

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[5] Interview with Ernesto Cortes, San Antonio, July 14, 1983. Interview with Sonia Hernandez, San Antonio, July 5, 1983. On COPS's growing impact, see, for example, Paul Burka, "The Second Battle of the Alamo," *Texas Monthly*, December 1977, pp. 139–50; Geoffrey Rips, "New Politics in Texas: COPS Comes to Austin," *Texas Observer*, Jan. 14, 1983, pp. 1, 10–14; Peter Skerry, "Neighborhood COPS," *New Republic*, Feb. 6, 1984, pp. 21–23. For a sampling of the recent, growing national media interest in grass-roots citizen activism, see, for instance, John Herbers, "Grass-Roots Groups Go National," *New York Times Magazine*, September 4, 1983; "Citizens Fill Gaps," *USA Today*, Cover Story, June 20, 1983; Joanna Brown, "Saul Alinsky's Democratic Legacy," *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1983; Nancy Shulins, "Backyard Rebellion: Neighborhoods Dig in and Fight City Hall," Associated Press feature, Jan. 29, 1984.

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out a rich and sophisticated intellectual life; without channels and mechanisms for the mobilization of middle-class and professional resources in support of local campaigns; without coordinated development of national programs and campaigns.

Most important, a movement that aims at the transformation of what is now a global corporate system must ultimately be guided by some broader vision of human possibility, a moral alternative to the way things are. Yet the socialist tradition itself has also produced abundant evidence that the understandings of "politics" that are most characteristic of its history, like its predominating equation of state expansion with social betterment, erode the spirit and independence of democratic activity. Thus the contemporary deactivation of much of the French left in the aftermath of the Mitterrand victory was presaged many years ago in the German Social Democratic party.

In his superb work *German Social Democracy*, Carl Schorske detailed the ways in which the party came to define its success more and more in terms of electoral gains and numbers of members in affiliated unions. The party did gain a kind of power, but it lost its transformative dimension in the process. The French socialist Jean Jaurès noted the irony as early as 1904: "Between your apparent political power as it is measured from year to year in the growing number of your votes and mandates . . . and the real strength of influence and action, there is a contrast that appears the more while your electoral strength grows."[6]

The heritage of democratic socialism has much to contribute. But its concepts, themselves immensely diverse and often contradictory, cannot be seen as the determinative premises of movement building. What is needed today is a much broader discussion that involves intellectuals, activists, and ordinary citizens out of a range of radical democratic traditions. Those who speak from democratic-populist, religious, feminist, black, ethnic, democratic-utopian, and even anarchist perspectives need to be engaged by those who claim the legacy of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas, and the dialogue must be informed by the actual "experiments in democracy" that have been taking shape across the nation in recent years, in the midst of great difficulties. There is no prior blueprint for what should emerge. But multiplying resources now exist upon which to draw. And there is no small urgency for the process. □

[6] The Jaurès quote is from Michael Harrington, *Socialism* (New York: Bantam, 1973), p. 89.

2. A Response by Joseph Schwartz

Harry Boyte has written a powerful critique of the bureaucratic state, the stalemate of the liberal imagination, and the candidate- and media-centric nature of American politics. Boyte reminds us that the fight for justice must be grounded in autonomous grass-roots movements. But his celebration of the communal borders on the apolitical. The role of representative institutions in a pluralist democracy almost disappears; so too the role political conflict plays in defining the values and membership of a "community."

"Community control" is an elusive concept. Communities can be reactionary or progressive, traditional or modern. And power can be used for various ends. Deciding who can reside in your neighborhood is an exercise of local control. I would hesitate, however, to see a community movement against integration as a manifestation of "substantive, communally grounded democracy." Also, most local communities lack resources and power. A movement for egalitarian "empowerment" would require a national, even international, redistribution of wealth. Community control of poverty is still poverty.

Boyte believes that his "rethinking of conventional wisdom" will enable the democratic left to reestablish a national presence. But precisely this loss of presence may have engendered an inordinate focus, by parts of the left, on community activism. The decline of the civil rights and antiwar movements and the crippling of the labor movement by stagflation in the 1970s have eroded the basis of both the "New Politics" and the New Deal coalition. Only when social movements are strong enough to vie for power can the democratic left have a major impact on the national political de-

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bate. Sensing the decline of these movements, many New Left veterans decided in the 1970s to organize at the community level around such issues as housing and energy. They sought to influence those in power through nonelectoral "direct action" on the part of previously disenfranchised constituencies. Predominantly new class "organizers" hoped to "empower" community residents by "training" them in the skills of advocacy.

Boyte has good reason to believe that electoral politics is alienating to many. (Is it so for the thousands of blacks activated in the Jackson campaign?) And we should fear trends toward centralization and bureaucratization. But any realistic politics must confront inherent tensions between planning and participation, centralization and decentralization, social movements and the state.

Boyte endorses Sheldon Wolin's call "to renounce the state paradigm." But this celebration of a communal democracy thwarted by an omnipotent state and rootless politicians gives pause to those who believe that democratic politics in a complex, industrial society must entail a contest for state power. Can neighborhood victories alone transform a society as large and diverse as that of the United States? Without a state powerful enough to control concentrated corporate power, how can we envision meaningful community and worker participation? The democratic state, strikingly absent from Boyte's essay, is the institutional means for defining a community's political preferences and for mediating the tensions that arise among distinct communities.

In Boyte's analysis, political parties are mistrusted because they fail to involve people intimately in efforts to transform their lives. I respect Boyte's plea for embedding democratic practices in local institutions. Democratic socialists regularly invoke the vision of worker and community control (while rarely describing how to render such values concrete). But one crucial means for articulating an alternative ideology remains that of representative democracy and political parties. That American parties do not stand for coherent programs and values is something to lament, but also to change. Downplaying participation in elections would mean that the arguments that shape our national political consciousness will continue to be determined by corporate PACs and image-oriented politicos.

To counterpose "movement" activity to electoral politics is to forget that the most "transformative" periods in modern democracies have occurred when mass movements have profoundly affected electoral politics and state policy: the CIO and the New Deal, the mass left and the Popular Front government of Léon Blum, the civil rights movement and the Great Society. This is not to suggest that social movements should be subordinated to the "instrumental interests" of political parties or the state. Democratic socialists reject this "transmission belt" conception of politics, and I concur with Boyte that a richly democratic society should contain a plurality of voluntary associations. But voluntary associations inevitably become politicized as they try to influence those who hold state power. The exigencies of governing will inevitably lead politicians to be less visionary than such movements, but still, we must continue to press them.

Recently some community organizations have hesitantly entered the electoral arena, confronting issues that their traditional focus on narrow economic concerns had previously led them to avoid. Organizations united in their demand for efficient garbage collection have divided bitterly when choosing among candidates who differ on whether affirmative action should be a consideration in hiring sanitation workers. "The people" are an amalgam of individuals with diverse political, class, sexual, and racial identities. What democratic activists must accomplish is to unite these constituencies in favor of some minimal, unifying program. Frequently this involves challenging a community to transform its notion of membership (as in the civil rights movement) or building coalitions among diverse communities.

It is ironic that amid a recent upsurge in progressive electoral politics, Boyte dismisses the role that parties can play in uniting constituencies and articulating a "transformative vision." Local candidates—Harold Washington in Chicago, John Lewis in Atlanta, Ruth Messinger and Al Vann in New York, Harry Britt in San Francisco, Mel King and Ray Flynn in Boston—have constructed more powerful coalitions among tenants, trade unionists, feminists, gays and lesbians, and minorities than have most of the grass-roots organizations.

Religious values can sustain communities besieged by an oppressive state. But recognition by a predominantly secular left that the church plays a democratic role in Poland and in the barrios of Latin America and East Los Angeles does not obliterate the fact that at other times churches have been an oppressive, parochial force. When feminists, gays and lesbians, and people of color hear a romantic rendition of the virtues of "community" they are historically justified in asking, Does this include me?

Predominantly parish-based community orga-

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nizations, which Boyte is correct to cite as the most vibrant, can act in a sectarian manner toward broader political forces. The San Francisco Organizing Project (SFOP) rarely works with nonchurch constituencies. And because their religiously organized constituency is politically diverse they eschew electoral politics. Thus when the San Francisco tenants' movements recently mobilized in favor of a referendum measure to tax corporations for the social costs of downtown high-rises, the SFOP refused to join, arguing that they only engaged in direct action and not in electoral politics. I do not want to devalue the victories community organizations have won; such organizations will undoubtedly be a core element in reconstructing a broad democratic left. But they are no quick-fix substitute for building such a left.

Boyte criticizes democratic socialism for its historic "equation of state expansion with social betterment." He surely is aware that many democratic socialists have advanced alternative conceptions of a decentralized, participatory welfare state based on universal entitlements. But before we stress our antistatist credentials, we should remember that the major threat in the U.S. is not a bureaucratic welfare state but its severe attenuation.

Boyte's hostility to the state concurs with the antimodernist sentiments expressed by fellow communitarian Lawrence Goodwyn (in "Organized Democracy," *democracy*, January 1981): "It now seems possible to offer a direct counterpremise to the idea of progress: societies based on large-unit production have a verifiable historical tendency to become increasingly more hierarchical over time." Given a modern industrial society, however, can we conceive of decentralizing economic and social life without some form of democratic national (not to mention international) planning? How can we rein in corporate power without using state power (such as plant-closing legislation, right-to-know laws, restrictions on capital mobility)? Whether or how we move to a high-tech, predominantly information and service-oriented economy, without blighting the industrial heartland, is a question necessitating *national* debate and coordination.

An inordinate emphasis on the antidemocratic nature of economic modernization and state intervention also ignores the sociological underpinnings of the (all too limited) gains of blacks and women. Black liberation in part depended on the weakening of traditional Southern agricultural communities and the mass migration of blacks into Northern industry (facilitated by government action in World War II). Affirmative action today demands that the state often intervene. "The feminization of poverty" and the dual oppression of women workers are the pivotal issues around which feminists, minorities, and trade unionists can be united in a new left of the 1980s.

Two major tenets of America's political culture serve as barriers to the reemergence of the American left: that the state is incapable of serving the general interest and that politics is inherently dominated by truly special interests and self-serving politicians. If leftists endorse these tenets, they do so at their peril. Surely the experience of the 1930s and 1960s demonstrates that a skillful coordination of electoral and nonelectoral struggles can result in significant reforms. Movements rise, fall, revive, and disappear. The real issue is whether those movements achieve institutionalized victories that transform society.

A complicated historical record belies Boyte's claim that "traditional socialist politics" inevitably leads to social demobilization. The Blum, Attlee, and second Roosevelt administrations all came to power riding a crest of militancy. Pressed by nonelectoral movements, these governments implemented massive social reforms. These moments of militancy and reform came to an end partly because of revivals of the right but also because the left governments did not know how to proceed beyond the welfare state they had just constructed. It was not the statist or electoral nature of socialism that demobilized popular movements; it was the limited vision of social democratic and socialist governments.*

Boyte and I concur that in the immediate future the progressive movement will not be a socialist one. I'm not sure, however, if he would agree that building a modest but visible democratic socialist movement is imperative for "the generation of longer-range vision, ideas, and strategies. . . ."

The question I ask is not meant to be glib. It is a

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* Contrary to Boyte's analysis, one of Mitterrand's greatest problems is that he came to power not on a wave of social militancy but on a massive anti-Giscard vote. The left and the unions were exhausted by the collapse of the Unione de la Gauche in the 1970s and by the sharp recession. The problem is not an absence of vision but rather the difficulty of constructing democratic socialism in one export-oriented economy amidst an international recession. A mobilized extraparliamentary left, while placing greater demands on the government, might have strengthened its position vis-à-vis the private sector. Thus the interaction between social movements, electoral politics, and the state is more complicated than Boyte suggests here.

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formidable question whether democratic radicals should bother to cleanse the word socialism of the authoritarian muck that history (and socialists) heaped upon it. Unfortunately, I don't think we have much choice. Antisocialism's major function in America is to serve as an ideological weapon of the right, and there are distinct limits to what nonsocialist popular movements can accomplish in the absence of recognizable and accepted socialist values. No matter how sensitive to "flag, faith, and family," if they attack corporate power they will be red-baited.

Better to be out in public struggling to redefine the socialist idea than to accept the psychic and political damage that hiding in the closet usually entails. □

3. A Rebuttal by Harry C. Boyte

Joe Schwartz's response to my piece is an articulate and interesting presentation that raises important issues. But its very clarity of argument also demonstrates the left conundrum, for Schwartz does not even suggest a scenario for a majoritarian movement that might challenge "politics as usual."

In Schwartz's schema, various separate "mass movements" exert pressure on office-holders and the state bureaucracy, but the electoral arena is the terrain on which they come together to discover their "common interests." Thus he points to politicians who in his view have achieved such an integration of movements; he lists a series of "minimal issues" of an electoral program, and he criticizes SFOP for staying out of a recent electoral coalition. But the point is that SFOP's avoidance of such a coalition is not simply a tactical decision. It reflects an entirely different way of thinking about the process of organizing and the creation of relationships between diverse groups.

Indeed, SFOP (which includes trade unions and community groups as well as congregations) rejects the "mass movement" notion itself, with the connotations of uprooted and interest-defined politics conveyed by the term. Relationships, in SFOP's perspective, are not built very deeply through electoral politics. They grow from detailed, mutually responsible work on issues, coupled with a rich, many-sided discussion of value and heritages. For similar reasons, SFOP avoided media publicity in its early organizing stages. "You don't build strong friendships or relations by reading about them in the paper," explained Mike Miller. The evidence suggests, in fact overwhelmingly, that such an approach has potentially far more impact on politics. COPS has transformed San Antonio politics and has also had effects across the state.

Schwartz and I agree—and disagree with many even in the best of local organizing—about the need for national "movement building." But the vocabulary and categories of the normal left ("mainly secular movement," "mass," even "left" itself) will not be the basis for such a development. I am more hopeful about such initiatives as the new effort to form an American "Green" movement—named Committees of Correspondence—that is, a populist-communitarian-ecological political force that is not a "third party" and draws on conservative as well as left-wing traditions.

Finally, Schwartz's espousal of "socialism" does have a defensive character, which illustrates the left dilemma. It is difficult to imagine how a sensibility like this (to paraphrase, "we have to call ourselves this because our adversaries will, though we realize there won't be much support because of the—partially self-induced—negative connotations of the word") could possibly generate enthusiasm. We need to reclaim, in a more positive vein, the old Socialist party's vocabulary, the vision of the commonwealth, incorporating the best of socialist traditions as well as religious, populist, native peoples' perspectives, and others. This was Martin Luther King's alternative to both capitalism and Marxist notions of class struggle and statism, which he believed reduced the person to "a depersonalized cog in the ever-turning wheel of the state." And it resurfaces today, in a variety of arenas. □

• *We will be glad to print succinct, brief comments from readers on the issues discussed in this exchange.* — EDS.

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Bernard Avishai

The Pursuit of Happiness & Other "Preferences"

Not long ago, my seniors' writing class at MIT considered the essay of one student—a kind, strapping fellow: no fool—on a political subject of his choice, of all things, the virtues of prostitution. Well, not the virtues of it, exactly, let us say the inevitability of it. Prostitution will always be with us, his essay began with a certain familiar elegance; "even Thomas Aquinas" conceded as much; and Gail Sheehy reports that there may be as many as 250,000 hookers "working" in the United States alone. Prostitution is a release-valve for sexual frustration that might otherwise lead to worse things, such as random violence, or rape. Besides, polls show that attitudes have changed; a majority of Americans now feel that prostitution is no crime. "Traditionalists"—whom he took for people who would wish to see hookers prosecuted, religious fundamentalists, Moral Majority types—fail to realize that laws against prostitution only drive the whole business into the criminal underworld, where most of what is reprehensible about the sex trade gets going, such as sadism and venereal disease.

Nor was "business" such an ironic word here, apparently, for what are a prostitute's favors if not services freely contracted for? We have a pluralist society; there are serious commercial interests at stake. Why should government interfere with prostitution or any other sort of freedom? he persisted. Think of the tax revenues the government is denying itself, as much as $1 billion a year. Think of the deficit.

Some of these arguments went over better than others, of course. Another student, a perceptive young woman who is usually patient with us all, rejected the idea that legalized hooking will mean less rape. Another doubted that the surveys were quite right: when were they taken, how many in the sample, did he check for others? We all wanted to find out more about whom he had interviewed. Still, before long, the subject seemed pretty much exhausted. Time to start talking about punctuation and tone?

Not so fast. It so happens that among this teacher's children are two daughters, the newest born last December. I was in no frame of mind to concede that a young woman's person is a commodity. There are *moral* questions here, I remonstrated, questions that ought not to be put aside for the claim that this or any action is inevitable. Urges and feelings shape our attitudes to some extent. But must we go into every political question as if actions express nothing but feelings, derived from one's place in "society," say, or from guilt-inducing parents? Actions ought to come from purposes, and, unlike feelings, purposes are, or can be made, conscious; they are subject to criticism. Should we not, therefore, try to think through what a good society should be like, what it would be like if everybody behaved this or that bad way, what kind of relations our human faculties need if we are to become fully human?

Oh, sure, the police should have better things to do than harass hookers. (I was really warming to the subject now.) But if a poll showed that most inner-city teens believed learning to read and write is a waste of time, should we do away with the laws against truancy? Is "freedom" merely the chance to satisfy whatever bundle of appetites we happen to carry around at the moment? Does every moral argument come from a preacher? Is every urge an interest? After class, I heard someone grumble that I must be growing less "liberal" as I approach middle age. (It is all in Gail Sheehy, a colleague reassured me.)

Less liberal? More nervous, yes, but less liberal too? Is this a liberal's rhetoric I am learning to despise?

In some uniquely American sense, I suppose it is: preferences mysteriously absorbed from social

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place or biological urge, preferences transformed into "values" and then into interests, polls measuring preferences, freedom as the chance to consume what commodities are preferred—such notions turn up all the time in the conversations of people who call themselves liberals, and especially in the explanations of the liberal press. It is by this logic, isn't it, that we learn to speak of sexual preference (remember passion?) as the making of a "minority group." Or learn to treat the social claims of organized labor as the pleadings of a "special interest." Why—Howell Raines of the *New York Times* tells us before anything else—does Walter Mondale support education? Because Walter Mondale's "strategist" has discovered how some target group in New York *prefers* talk of education. (Notice how television reporters, especially, seem to brighten when they can report on the workings of ambition.)

Just realism? Perhaps. Thomas Hobbes thought so; presumably, journalists could do worse. On the other hand, what more is implied by this kind of journalism than cynicism, or the claim that prostitution is, after all, inevitable? Henry Steele Commager observed recently that it is disturbing how few public people will speak (or write) of "happiness" nowadays, of the "commonwealth." I think he means to lament how few *liberals* use such words, and that our reluctance to do so is as much a cause of the times as a sign of them. The more we think about political problems in terms of that student's behaviorist rhetoric—I mean in terms of "systems" and "preferences"—the more we are apt to think that views of happiness are nothing more than idiosyncrasy, a mere matter of taste, not a matter of opinion. According to this rhetoric, the "commonweal" is literally impossible, a conclusion that will give solace to political consultants (and pimps), but which also seems to make moral debate of any kind obsolete. Is there really nothing more for a liberal to be "pro" than "choice"?

I think so, though it makes one a little anxious to assert this; obviously, people have differing views of happiness, and the commonwealth may have no more decent ideal than tolerance. Yet the pursuit of happiness is never entirely a private matter. When I say what is good for me, I am inadvertently implying a standard for everybody. The word "good" cannot mean something private, Aristotle coached us, however much we disagree about the virtues that bring happiness, and however much privacy is judged a good thing. Commager's point is, precisely, that principles such as tolerance are also something more than private values; they were acquired from a serious public debate about what permanent standards sustain a liberal democracy. They are certainly more than what is implied by the term "special interests," though (before Pat Caddell's time, and mine) tolerance has indeed been thought to be among the interests of organized labor.

Let us also agree that certain values are necessary for all of us, in common, if we are to appreciate what the open society affords—among these, the experience of literacy, some acquaintance with various artistic and literary traditions, the dignity of emotion to be gained in families, faith in the truth and in scientific doubt. Values such as these are not acquired through common sense; just listen to children squabbling. What is the principle of tolerance if it is not a claim about what way of life is good for everybody who is literate, individual; for people—John Stuart Mill put it neatly—who are "capable of being improved by free and equal discussion."

Are there no institutions, aside from the First Amendment, that are intrinsically democratic? Institutions liberals had better be for if we are to have "free and equal discussion" at all? Of course there are. I mean strong schools, concise language, families that hold together, economic programs that do not break the vessels, architecture that implies faith in the future, books and public airwaves that do not corrupt our children, a national defense based on universal service, a healthful environment, and more. These are common values, enabling values, the basics of 1984. When liberals lose sight of how democracy needs such real prerequisites, we lose what binds us into a community, however attenuated. By the way, we also lose our best arguments against military interventions in places where illiterate people say they prefer "democracy" but more deeply want to be rid of landlords.

IF LIBERALS will not be for such values, who will be for them? Ronald Reagan, that's who. Here is a man who will use "happiness" and "common good" with little apparent embarrassment, and his mere willingness to do so may be the key to his political success. Sometimes I think that what Reagan really defeated in 1980 was not the ideals of the New Deal but the rhetoric of the sociologists who defended the Great Society. Discipline, civility, literacy, strength, family, "faith"—these things deserve a defense from the left. No less than jobs, they require the supports of the welfare state, not its dismantling. Why should liberals continue to allow Reagan's people—those militaristic simplifiers, those scoffers at academic freedom, those

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budget breakers and Sugarpop salesmen—to seem to be the country's only spokespeople for what Americans hold in common?

A few years back, Senator Paul Tsongas argued that the Democratic party, to move with the times, must become more "conservative" in economic matters and more "progressive" in social ones. If I understand him correctly, I think he got it exactly backward. Not that we should start joining in calls for federal control of the media or anything like that, though we could, for example, demand more federal money for public television and radio, no matter how many people use their services, and in spite of their comparatively elite standards. What I mean is that Democrats, too, need something called "vision," and this begins, Commager reminds us, with people who use words such as happiness and commonwealth. There is a public and a public good. Can't we build coalitions without implying that coalition politics is some kind of end in itself? Is the preacher's kid listening? □

Peter I. Rose

Some Reflections on Refugee Policy

Few photographs are more heartrending than the classic "madonna shot," the one of the thin, wan refugee mother and her dull-eyed baby. It is often used to bring to public attention the private sufferings of thousands of human beings caught up in the cross-currents of revolution and war.

In recent years the Madonna of the Refugee Camp tends to have an Asian visage. She is usually Vietnamese or Khmer. A boat person, perhaps, or an escapee from Cambodia. She could well be Chinese, Lao, or Hmong. (She could also be Afghan, Ethiopian, Haitian, or Palestinian.) Her specific ethnicity is less important than her condition. With silent eloquence she communicates the pathos of being uprooted and afraid.

Not all refugees are saints, but most share certain common characteristics. In law they are victims of persecution forced to flee their homelands. In fact they are dependents—people dependent on others to rescue them from their plight, provide them with assistance to meet immediate needs, and aid them in making some sort of new life in a neighboring land or, later, in a third country. As Bruce Grant, author of *The Boat People*, has explained, this state of dependency means that refugees often share another fate. Despite the portrait that elicits compassion, to many in receiving societies

> . . . [The] refugee is an unwanted person. He or she makes a claim upon the humanity of others without always having much . . . to give in return. If, after resettlement, a refugee works hard or is lucky and successful, he may be accused of taking the work or the luck or success from someone else. If he fails or becomes resentful or unhappy, he is thought to be ungrateful and a burden on the community. A refugee is especially unwanted by officials: his papers are rarely in order, his health is often suspect; and sometimes, although he claims to be fleeing from persecution, he is simply trying to get from a poor, overpopulated country to a rich underpopulated one.

Not all refugees are equally poor, alienated, or unwelcome. Some have easier times than others. Those who were socially, religiously, or politically marginal prior to their exile are often better prepared to cope with the ambiguities of life in new lands than those who were totally integrated into their old societies. Cultural factors are critical too. Moving to a society like one's own is far easier than going to an entirely foreign one. Knowing the language of the new society is a boon; so is the possession of talents, skills, and above all training that is useful in a new setting.

Still, while these may be necessary factors for easing adjustment, they are not sufficient. Many worldly, articulate, highly trained refugees have, by virtue of their apparent ability to function in a new society, misled observers into believing that they are well adjusted to their fate. Yet there is often a considerable gap between public personalities and private thoughts; and many cosmopolites ache as much for home as the emblematic madonna and the displaced peasant.

II

Sacred texts of many cultures indicate how one must deal with the stranger at the gate.

In the Jewish tradition, there is the admonition to love the stranger as yourself "for we were strangers in the land of Egypt." That sentiment, first stated in Leviticus, is repeated three times in Deuteronomy. It is a theme that reappears in the New Testament in somewhat different form, often

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expressed in parables such as that of the Good Samaritan.

The Judeo-Christian tradition has counterparts in others. In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* we are told how Theseus, King of Athens, welcomed the exiled Oedipus to his land saying,

> Never could I turn away from any stranger
> such as you are now
> and leave him to his fate. . . .

In modern times, as in ancient ones, it can be a great help to the estranged when others extend a hand of welcome. It can be devastating to the seekers of asylum when no humble Samaritan or noble king stands by to assist. Yet the historical record shows that far more barriers have been erected to prevent entry than bridges laid down to enhance it. Fear of the stranger seems a more common sentiment than compassion.

Rudyard Kipling offered a reasonable sociological explanation for this morally reprehensible tendency.

> The Stranger within my gate
> He may be true or kind
> But he does not talk my talk—
> I cannot feel his mind.

Kipling was writing of a phenomenon known in Theseus' day—and in our own—as xenophobia, the fear of the stranger, a far more widely held sentiment than its opposite, philoxenia, the love of the foreigner (which is often translated from the Greek of the New Testament as "hospitality").

If xenophobia is so widespread a sentiment one might ask: How is it that *any* political sojourners have found refuge in other lands? The explanation lies in the broader social context. After all, refugees do not simply appear. They are products of upheavals within and conflicts between societies. Given this fact, it is not at all surprising that many acts of assistance are offered not simply, solely, or even mainly because of biblical injunction but for geopolitical reasons, with diplomatic points being scored or debts paid or heavy prices extracted for granting the homeless asylum.

While there have always been charitable people who welcomed the "weary pilgrims," most often assistance and protection and, especially, admission have been provided on a highly selective basis. In this century, in many countries, the control of borders has become a major policy issue.

III

THIS NATION, which began, in the words of that stirring Thanksgiving cantata, "When a band of *exiles* moored their barks on the wild New England shore," has not always treated seekers of sanctuary with equanimity or equality. For many years there were laws on our books that blatantly discriminated against the entry of certain categories of would-be petitioners.

Today many of the old restrictions have been lifted, many of the explicit biases modified. Many who work with refugees point to the Refugee Act of 1980 as a major step forward in dealing with those who have suffered persecution based on their physical attributes, religious beliefs, or political affiliations, or who have "a well-founded fear of persecution" should they return—or be returned—to their homelands. However, the Act did provide refugee status for those who are in that twilight zone—those, like the Haitian boat people, who might be called "economic migrants for political reasons."

In a recent paper, political scientist Norman Zucker addressed himself to some of the problems of recent American immigration policies that seem at once too rigid and too flexible. They are rigid, he notes, when authorities wish to stick to the letter of the law (as in the case of the controversies over the "INSing" of young Khmer); they are flexible when it is politically expedient.

While allotments for refugee admissions have become considerably more generous in recent years, U.S. actions in these realms are still essentially reactions to particular political situations. The undercurrent of East-West politics remains the most prominent factor enhancing the opportunities of some and inhibiting the access of others. It is not, however, the only one.

Special-interest groups have long been a part of the American political scene. Bloc power is an old factor that must be reckoned with. Generally, it is thought of in terms of domestic affairs (such as pressures to advance civil rights, to legalize abortion, to get prayers back into schools, to provide bilingual education); but, of course, pressures have long been exercised by powerful constituencies to affect immigration policy. Think, for example, of how, and why, in the recent sessions of Congress, amendment after amendment was tacked on to the Simpson-Mazzoli immigration-reform bill.

Some of those who recently sought admission to the United States have benefited not only by having gotten out of the right (actually "left") place at the right time, but also because they have had effective lobbyists championing their causes. That such cases as those of Soviet Jews are just does not gainsay the fact that far fewer voices are being raised to assist the Haitians or the Salvadorans or

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black South Africans to get out of their repressive societies or to ease their entry into this one.

There is one other matter. With the exception of the "1960" Cubans (originally admitted under special dispensations) and the more recent Marielitos, almost all others now designated as refugees have come through other countries, screened as it were through a bureaucratic filter that sought to determine their official admissibility. Like Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines, the United States has recently had to face the prospect of becoming a nation of mass "first asylum," where large numbers of expellees and escapees have tried to land. Like other governments, ours too has balked at the prospect of an uncontrolled influx, and so has the public.

Malaysian authorities worry about large numbers of Sino-Vietnamese who might upset the delicate ethnic balance between the numerically and politically dominant Malays and the economically powerful Chinese. The Thais worry about subversive elements infiltrating their society. Many Americans also seem to have their own special worries. There is the old matter of "undesirable aliens"—and the new one, the "slippery slope."

The first harkens back to earlier campaigns, nativist in name, racist in character, which specified who should be permitted to enter this society and participate in the system. (It was this sentiment that led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the more comprehensive restrictive legislation of the 1920s.) The extensive publicity about Castro's castoffs—including the small but significant group of criminals who infiltrated Miami's underworld and engaged in nefarious activities as far north as Union City, New Jersey, and the South Bronx—has given credence to those who claim that such rogues are typical of what can be expected if anyone who claims persecution is allowed to enter. As is often the case, many recently arrived Cubans of spotless character are tarred with that brush.

If the first matter is a throwback to reactionary sentiments of an earlier era, the second has to do with a problem that may be an unintended consequence of liberal policies. Once a person has gained entry into the United States as a refugee he or she becomes, in the lingo of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, a "magnet." Immediate family members seeking to join their relatives have priority. Federal authorities and local communities have had to deal with the escalation of people who often define "immediate family" in far broader terms than we do, and with the extra burdens that are created.

There is increasing pressure to avoid what is sometimes described as the threat of inundation. Of late, concerns have been raised not only by traditional advocates of restricted entry but by neonativists of varying background and political persuasion. Included in the latter category are leaders of some minority communities and the rank and file of various labor unions who worry about favoring the non-American needy while failing to deal effectively with the economic woes of American workers. This is particularly characteristic of those in the Miami area, in sections of southern Texas and southern California and, to a lesser extent, in San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Chicago, and New York. Worried about the fact that "we are no longer in control of our borders," many fail to distinguish between the truly dispossessed and other newcomers, legal and illegal.

IV

EVEN FOR THOSE who do know the difference, there are still countervailing forces among those who control the gates. There is the humanitarian proclivity, the genuine desire to play the role of Good Samaritan. It is deeply felt by many who carry out American policies. But there is also the pressure of politics, the need to "weigh difficult choices," to keep a weather eye on friends and foes. When the two converge, as in the case of saving Vietnam's boat people, policy-makers can be at once pure of heart and politically pragmatic.

When moral sensibilities clash with national, ethnic, or local interests many resort to rhetoric about the nature of political power and the character of those who flee their homelands. They act accordingly. In the first instance, one thinks immediately of Jeane Kirkpatrick's dubious distinction between regimes that are "totalitarian" and those that are "authoritarian"; in the second, of expressed differences between "victims" (like Poles) and "opportunists" (like Haitians and Salvadorans). The fact is that, even with a number of significant changes, our refugee policy is still far from free of favor—or politics. □

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Melvin Seiden

The Business of Tennis

Nothing in Antonioni's *Blow-Up* is as memorable as the tennis game played without a ball while Thomas, the hero of the film, looks on. The camera tracks the mimes who play their ghostly game and when Thomas retrieves the imaginary ball that has gone out of court and throws it back to the players, we are delighted by the wit of the gesture. Tennis observed as a purely visual phenomenon becomes a geometry of motion, an aesthetic experience. It is a dance that symbolizes the sport in the way in which love-making in once reticent movies used to imitate sexual intercourse.

Yet this ballet of tennis can never be tennis if it lacks a ball to be served, stroked, smashed, or hit out of court. Like any other human activity, tennis must be grounded in a material stratum. There is no wordless poetry and there is no spiritual tennis. The simulacrum of tennis mimed in *Blow-Up* cannot be the real thing. What makes tennis tennis, even when played by untalented weekenders, is the physical reality of racket, net, and ball. And what characterizes real, quotidian, big-time tennis is its materialism. Once a genteel pastime, it is now big business. In a few good years world-class players become teen-age millionaires. Businesses batten on tennis as the great corporations of the military-industrial complex cohabit with the game that prefers to be called "Defense." Producing, advertising, and selling the equipment and clothing used on the courts—these represent obvious commercial exploitation; there are many other businesses, trades, services and professions that, like so many pilot fish, co-exist in pleasant and profitable symbiosis with the great shark of tennis.

Consider the changes that have transformed the familiar wood racket. After decades of more or less stasis, it succumbed to evolution. It is less significant that the steel racket was invented by the old-time French player Henri Lacoste than that it was in the U.S.A. that the invention achieved its popularity, becoming the emblematic weapon of Jimmy Connors and of the new tennis. All of us, however inept, could fantasize that we too might hit the ball with Connors's power and precision if we had that scientifically designed instrument in our hands. We rushed out to buy and to play. The new tennis was a mass phenomenon and it began in America—in rich, powerful, arrogant and, as it then seemed in the '60s, omnicompetent America. Now, almost 20 years later, the tennis revolution looks like an example of technological and economic progress. At any rate, tennis rackets, along with computers, jeans, rock and roll, and the dazzling special effects of such films as *E.T.*, are on that long shopping list of items that demonstrate the capacity of the American economy to offer products that consumers are eager to buy.

THE AMERICAN CITIZEN is a consumer who sometimes votes. In the world of tennis, giving the consumer what he wants means that you and I, social players inhabiting the great, bulging middle of the bell curve, must be made to believe that if we throw away our Victorian rackets and buy one that is aluminum, graphite, or fiberglass, we will become better players. Consider then what is happening on the tennis courts of America. Not Antonioni tennis, not "you *and* I"; it's me *against* you, me with my antique number and you with your oversized job that cost you twice what I paid for mine and that, it is devoutly to be wished, will give you shots commensurately better and stronger and more accurate than mine.

What we have on the courts is a tennis arms race.

Like the great arms race, this one is expensive, ever escalating, and ubiquitous. If Portugal or Niger does not have its own up-to-date tennis racket, it soon will; and if a country lacks the wherewithal to produce its own, it must import the latest model from one of the more prosperous countries. No self-respecting nation wishes to be without its own airline, the latest in lethal weapons, or the sophisticated tennis racket.

Competition is the engine that drives the juggernaut in both races. If the U.S.S.R. is always trying to match our power, we must catch up with their quantitative superiority. Not even Casper Weinberger, I believe, says that the Russians have better or more ingenious weapons than we have. The Reagan administration claims that the Soviets have more—more nuclear warheads, more megatons of power, more tanks, more soldiers, more of their GNP budgeted for military purposes. Thus it is inherent in the idea of deterrence through superior strength that the opponents keep leap-frogging. It is hoped that when the billions of dollars of the defense budget mutate into hardware, this country will be more secure than our presumed or potential enemies. Until, that is, they take the next step.

The tennis player, however, soon discovers that he can't close the gap between his opponent and himself by technology. He cannot buy excellence

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with better equipment. The tennis player can buy education, as it were, through lessons, drill, and coaching; but this is a matter of perfected skills. Even a rich professional soon realizes that there's no point in wasting money on gadgetry; the tennis arms race flourishes more intensely among the Walter Mitty hackers than in the ranks of accomplished players.

If, however, one examines tennis as a social phenomenon—its professional flowering in the United States and internationally, its ever growing popularity with recreational players and spectators—one comes to the very different conclusion that throwing money at a sport certainly can't hurt it. Because there is lots of money in tennis, more and better players are being produced each year. And because more and better players keep coming up, more money gets poured in—from ticket sales, advertisers, TV, hackers who buy $200 rackets and sneakers that may cost more than a man spent for a decent wool suit not too many years back.

A renaissance—in the arts, in science, learning, or in styles of diversion—is almost always grounded in material prosperity. If Elizabethan England was a "nest of singing birds," there was a causal connection between that literary flowering and the nation's naval, military, and economic power. And now that England is a poor, shabby, industrially second-rate power, we can see that it may have begun to lose its importance in tennis when it lost its empire. It no longer produces a crop of major players, only an occasional exception like Virginia Wade who defies the harsh rule that national wealth and power breed achievement. England, like most Third World countries, is not rich enough or well equipped enough—it has virtually no indoor facilities—to be in the tennis business in a big way.

What England mainly has to show for its days of past dominance are the grass courts of Wimbledon. The U.S.A., busy concocting "computer designed" rackets and new kinds of synthetic surfaces, cannot

Marvin E. Rozen

Dynastic Discontinuity: A Tongue-in-Cheek Proposal*

I had a dream the other night, no doubt triggered by recent behavior in the oil market, of a way in which $5/barrel oil could be obtained on a more or less permanent basis. With all the fuss over falling oil prices, it may seem unsporting to threaten down-and-out oil producers with larger and sustained reductions, especially when they seem to be having so much trouble adjusting to modest declines. Yet in this camel-eat-camel world, sentiment and manners have little place and must give way to arrangements that can benefit many, despite the pain caused a few. We cannot allow the plight of desert royalty to becloud our judgment and besides, as we shall see, they don't fare too badly.

The key to lower oil prices lies in reconsidering what determines current production decisions. The oil industry, especially in the Middle East, is characterized by huge amounts of shut-in capacity and extremely low real costs of actually lifting the oil from the ground. What determines current production is, on the one hand, the rough correspondence between oil's value left in the ground and what it will fetch in world markets and, on the other hand, how urgently those controlling production decisions need to generate a current cash flow.

Under such circumstances, two considerations are relevant:

- First, restricting production not only raises current prices but also the value of shut-in reserves, in part directly through the higher valuation of oil itself, and in part indirectly through demonstrating the ability to sustain high prices by managing supply. For both reasons, assuming dynastic continuity, oil-in-the-ground becomes more valuable, and therefore less of it will be lifted.
- Second, those now controlling production are not driven by compelling and overwhelming need for more revenues. Oil revenues flow to a relatively few, who in turn convert a considerable portion thereof into a diversified collection of assets, sequestered abroad in countries showing a proper respect for private property; the consequent increase in their wealth and the income it produces reinforce their reluctance to run the pumping stations full-blast. Who needs more when you have so much, especially when the value of what's left in the ground—great collateral, that—directly depends upon the influence of current on future prices? The conclusion inexorably follows: for varied and pow-

* I say tongue-in-cheek because, nowadays, life so often imitates art and reality is spawned by fiction.

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afford grass courts. True, there are a few private clubs that still hang on to grass courts that require constant and costly maintenance. But now that tennis is a sport for the masses, we must have courts that can withstand the wear and tear of heavy traffic.

The once socially upper-class Wimbledon remains then for the new aristocrats: the highly paid professionals who continue to play their tournament on these impractical and technologically primitive courts. Along with the tennis at green and frumpy Wimbledon, then, a spectator can enjoy some piquant cultural ironies: players with rackets of odd sizes and curious shapes and made of materials developed in the labs of the NASA space program competing on 19th-century courts lovingly tended by groundkeepers who, one surmises, would never do anything so cheeky as to ask for a union or a raise, while platoons of TV technicians are filming matches that will be beamed via satellite to stations throughout the world.

IN THE UNITED STATES, HOWEVER, tennis, technology, and business are symmetrically mated.

A few years ago, the U.S. Open Tournament was removed from the courts of Forest Hills because this 1920s facility was thought to be old-fashioned and inadequate. By changing the venue to Flushing Meadow the impresarios could accommodate larger audiences and build a complex that, in addition to having other modern features, would allow TV crews to get better pictures. The rebuilt Louis Armstrong stadium, where the main matches are played, is huge. Box-office revenues (either directly or indirectly related to the prize money) are greater than they were in Forest Hills. Regularly and maddeningly, however, planes from two airports fly over Louis Armstrong stadium. Satchmo himself, with his seraphic horn and jackhammer notes, might have had trouble making himself heard against the din of the jets. These inconveniences are the price of progress—progress that generates purses and perks of Hollywood di-

erful reasons, present oil producers have too little current incentive to pump the stuff out.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN, though, if we could arrange, discreetly of course, for those currently controlling the wells and pipelines to be judiciously eased out without extreme prejudice, so that they may enjoy the pleasures of being physically reunited with their assets abroad? Surely, we have in the past conducted far more ambitious destabilization exercises for far less worthy causes. And the more fastidious and squeamish can view such dynastic discontinuities as a form of international antitrust enforcement procedure, wholly consistent with our commitment to competitive free enterprise. The former rulers will now be reduced to counting their domiciles merely on one hand, retaining only a shrunken retinue of courtiers and functionaries, pursuing such pleasures as falconry in other climes, and making other life-style adjustments. And if they hanker for the sands and heat of the desert, the world has no shortage of suitable places.

Meanwhile, their lean and hungry successors, the new rascals, will most assuredly be eager to tread the same path as their predecessors. To amass their bundle, however, they will have to turn the oil taps on at full flow. Their greed for revenues and awareness of the recently demonstrated impermanence of power will make them run the pumps overtime. Oil prices will plummet. These new masters too will grow fat and soft, as they place their wealth in safe havens abroad. They will begin to emit statesmanlike noises about managing supply, stabilizing markets, the need to conserve a nonreplenishable resource, maintaining the solvency of the world financial system, and how vital it is that oil prices rise from their dangerously low levels. When that happens, we know it will be time to recycle these leaders, so that they too can be reunited with their assets abroad. Out there in the desert, lean and hungry men are in the wings, waiting for a turn. They will have urgent desires for cash now.

As long as the oil lasts, the world can thus pay a price approximating the real cost of producing it instead of being subjected to the extortion of brigands. All it takes would be that over a decent interval, say perhaps once each decade, a new and eager group must be installed to make those production decisions that convert black gold into overseas wealth, and beloved and impersonal market forces will do the rest. There will be no bloodshed; the losers get a considerable consolation prize; and it is a much more egalitarian income-distribution policy. It will all be very civilized. The only nagging doubt is whether the world can accommodate itself to $5/barrel oil; from the looks of present consternation, that may be the most difficult adjustment of all. □

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mensions, virtually year-round professional play on the four continents rather than the short season of the past, and of course "free" TV viewing for the fans at home. And if Bjorn Borg was ungracious enough to complain about having to play under lights at Flushing Meadow—night matches bring in more dollars—that just showed how effete he'd become. Do our nocturnal baseball players bitch about their topsy-turvy lives as swing-shift sportsworkers, so to speak? Not unless they're foolish enough to try to bite the hand that feeds, they don't.

Contemporary tennis and opera have certain features in common: in both, the technical achievements seem to become more dazzling with each new season; in both, since the physical and emotional demands are so great, careers tend to be as short-lived as they have been flamboyant; in both, surely, money is magic.

The United States may be in the process of losing its industrial preeminence; but it continues to dominate in many fields of science and technology, in computers, conventional and nuclear arms, countless other enterprises, and indubitably in tennis. Though we hear the boast too often, it remains a truth: there is undoubtedly an American genius for doing things better than others have done them before. We didn't invent tennis; what we did was use our genius to invent a more powerful and successful way of playing the game. Tennis, one might say, was subjected to technical redesign and the result was the aggressive, serve-and-volley machine-gun style. If the United States has more and possibly better first-class players than any other country, that is because we have used money and know-how to manufacture tennis players as efficiently as we used to produce automobiles.

Though tennis has fewer black players than most other sports, it is in the United States that one finds the greatest number of up-and-coming black (and white) players. Here they can find the college scholarships, private sponsors, and whatever else it takes—that is, costs—to nurture talent. In the Depression of the 1930s it was prizefighting, and now young blacks might be sizing up tennis as an avenue to fame and fortune. If these are African blacks, they will do well to get themselves to the United States, where affluence makes the competition more competitive, coaching and training are more sophisticated, tournaments more numerous, and where, in short, the tennis-technology-business trinity operates with budgets that would be the envy of most African governments. That, at any rate, is what the career of Yannik Noah, the only black African superstar, suggests. Had he not been discovered, sponsored, and guided by Arthur Ashe, his fate might well have been that of any other mute Milton of the courts—promise unfulfilled and obscurity.

It looks like progress: from the $500 boron rackets ("strings and taxes extra") to the rules, just about everything in tennis is being subjected to improvement. And that, say the boosters, is good for everybody—for weekenders, college players, professionals, and most notably, women: tots, girls, teen-agers, undergraduate team players, pros, housewives. Women, who, it is widely acknowledged, are beginning to come into their own. If big-league tennis is not yet an equal-opportunity employer, the earnings-and-prestige gap between men and women is getting narrower each year.

THE CHANGES THAT HAVE REVOLUTIONIZED tennis and continue to alter many of its features do not please everyone. There are purists, traditionalists, romantics, nay-sayers who look back wistfully to what might be called pretechnological days and ask: Is it really progress? Is this so-called improvement a case of innovation for its own sake? What's wrong with the shapely, comely, friendly wood racket?

In the '70s promoters gave us another innovation: team-tennis. The idea was bound to occur to somebody that the tennis lover too deserves to have a collective body, an abstraction upon which to lavish his love and not just individual favorites, a Rod Laver here, a Billy Jean King there. Team-tennis made its appearance with the inevitability of a natural phenomenon. In fact it was a shoddy, debased, hermaphroditic thing and it flopped. Its failure was in the box office and far from inevitable. Some of us feared that if it had succeeded in establishing itself, this inferior product, by a kind of Gresham's law, would drive out the genuine article.

But fail it did and now, in retrospect, team-tennis seems as dumb an idea as the infamous Bobby Riggs-Margaret Court battle of the sexes. When I said something of the sort to my friend Harold, he said: Wait a minute! Team-tennis didn't make it, Harold said, because it was ahead of its time. The inventors were on to a good thing but the world wasn't ready for it. You claim, Harold said, that team-tennis fans are an ignorant lot. Maybe so. But let's not be snobs about this. The other sports fill stadiums with great mobs of dumb—you'd probably say *illiterate*—fans. Why not, Harold asked, let those types have the fun of supporting a tennis team?

Team-tennis, he argued, was a conceptual break-

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through. The same Faustian technological drive that has revolutionized the ways in which tennis is played and merchandised is behind it. If Harold is right, team-tennis will make a comeback; it's just a matter of time.

But the purist, keeper of the flame, insists that if team-tennis were to come back, even take over, this lamentable state of affairs would not obscure the truth, which is that old-style individual tennis is the real thing, the unadulterated product, the only way the game *should* be played. This argument comes out of the long, rich, fiercely intellectualist tradition of Plato and neo-Platonism. It is a position that holds fast to the conviction that ideas, values, and principles can never be permanently silenced by the brute facts of material and technological reality, not even in the realm of athletics. The purist's rejection of Harold's easy tolerance expresses a way of looking at tennis (and the world) that takes us back again to Antonioni's solemn and funny scene in *Blow-Up*, this time to teach the doctrine of the primacy of the archetypal image. The difficult Socratic lesson is this: if we did not have an image, however faint, of essential and ideal tennis fixed in our minds, we would not only be unable to understand the mimes' dance; we would not be able to differentiate degrees of skill in performance when these manifest themselves in nonsymbolic, phenomenal, real tennis. But all you have to do is look at the score. That tells the story. The scoreboard is the final arbiter and beyond that, the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) computer rankings. Those, Harold says, are the brute facts you dismiss so glibly.

AND YET . . . does the score tell the whole story? Does the best player win? Is it a hollow paradox to make the claim that the best player doesn't always or necessarily win? Why is it that knowledgeable players and critics do from time to time have the feeling that a player in a particular match has on the whole played better—with more imagination, style, courage, grace, intelligence—than his opponent and yet not been able to win? Is it a delusion—this unverifiable feeling, this aesthetic intuition?

Recapitulating in a small way the history of the automobile, the new tennis has diffused itself across social, economic, and international boundaries. It has undergone a liberating, democratizing revolution. It has been Americanized. Which is why many of its contemporary features are distasteful to the romantic reactionary. For him, this democratization is better described as the triumph of the crowd. It isn't the silliness of team-tennis that most disturbs him. It is the pervasive vulgarization of tennis as a whole. He is appalled by the bad manners, obscene sums of money, hype, contempt for sportsmanship, an incipient and sometimes overt violence and, above all, by that American addiction to overkill, the gross too-muchness that characterizes some of the most distinctively American aspects of American life and now makes its presence felt in the culture of tennis. Undeniably, there is the enormous success of the automobile revolution; but then there are the toll of the dead on the highways, the dead and dying cities. Undeniably, there is the enormous success of the tennis revolution. . . .

The analogy is a compelling one. And when that romantic reactionary takes a good, hard, critical look at our technology, supermarkets, Hollywood, and military budgets, our armies of obese shoppers doing the shopping malls that our automobile culture created, he cannot refrain from asking the of course snobbish, Platonic, and elitist question: Is tennis next? Has it already leaped over maturity and landed in decadence? □

Mark Levinson

Reds Without Politics

Two young, politically engaged film-makers, Julia Reichert and James Klein, with one successful documentary (*Union Maids*) to their credit; a subject full of human and political complexity; seven years in preparation, including 400 interviews (only about a dozen make it into the film); an Academy Award nomination—combine all this and we have every right to expect a stimulating result. Unfortunately, *Seeing Red*, a documentary about American Communists, doesn't live up to these expectations.

According to some estimates, perhaps three-quarters of a million people passed through the American Communist party. Any honest account must recognize that thousands of bright, hard-working, idealistic Americans joined the CP. Many of these people abandoned personal interests, and made a commitment to what they believed would

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be the future of humanity. That such an unquestioning commitment can be blinding and self-defeating is, in retrospect, hardly debatable. It is this reality—individuals betrayed by their idealism—that is the source of the continuing fascination with the American Communist experience. There is a human tragedy and a political tragedy here. But this film doesn't explore either.

Using archival film footage and still photographs as background, most of the film consists of contemporary interviews with ex- and current members of the Communist party. There are moments of authenticity in these interviews.

- Howard "Stretch" Johnson tells about his days in Harlem as a dancer in the Cotton Club. The CP in those days made racial equality a major part of its activity, so it made sense to join.
- Bill Bailey, a colorful longshoreman, describes what it was like to give his first soapbox speech.
- Dorothy Healey recalls organizing poor California farm workers.
- Carl Hirsch, tears in his eyes, reads letters he wrote to his wife 40 years ago describing the conditions of desperately poor sharecroppers.
- Howard Johnson explains the trauma of 1956; his life shattered, it took him as many years to recover as he spent in the party.

Despite such moments of insight, the interviews are for the most part stolid. We get little sense of what motivated these people to join the CP and less sense of what life was like in the party. There is no mention of the fact that the CP was strongest in immigrant communities, especially among Jews and Finns.

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The film's problem is not with the people interviewed, who respond honestly to the questions they are asked. The problem is in the questions that are *not* asked. To say this is not to insist that the filmmakers should have taken a particular point of view on the CP. It is only to suggest that in order to fulfill their own aim of telling the story of individual Communists, Reichert and Klein should have probed the contradictions and tensions of the Communist experience. This was not done.

For instance, Bill Bailey describes how antifascism was an integral part of his involvement in the CP in the late '30s. He says that when he saw pictures of Nazis dragging Jewish women through the streets he reacted with horror: "That could be my mother." Several minutes later the Hitler-Stalin Pact is mentioned almost in passing. What did Bill Bailey think at the time? We don't know because the question isn't even asked.

Dorothy Healey at one point says that during her years in the party she was "a little Stalin." Later in the film she says she "has no regrets." One would like to know a bit more about how she reconciles these two statements. But no further questions are asked.

It is simply not possible to understand the story of American Communists if it is severed from its historical context and the political activity of the CP. Yet this film says almost nothing about the Third Period, dual unions, social fascism, the Moscow Trials, the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Popular Front, the suppression of worker revolts in Eastern Europe, or the Hungarian Revolt of 1956. The result is an apolitical portrait of very political people. These people lived through the most traumatic years of this century—and surely took a very particular political stand. To ignore the political part of their experience is to ignore what defines them as Communists.

ONE SUSPECTS that the reason for the absence of politics or history from this film is that it would introduce a measure of complexity the film-makers didn't know how to deal with. Reichert and Klein want to refute what they take to be a popular stereotype of American Communists. Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, and Herbert Philbrick make appearances to describe the CP as part of a demonic international conspiracy. Reichert and Klein, with good reason, want to invalidate this kind of crude anticommunism and to show the humanity of the Communist experience. But they are only partially successful, because in refuting one simplistic picture, they replace it with another. □

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Louis Menand

Rules for the Game

CRITICISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE, by Frank Lentricchia. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 173 pp. $15.00.

THE ARTS WITHOUT MYSTERY, by Denis Donoghue. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown. 195 pp. $15.95.

Frank Lentricchia has chosen a difficult problem for his new book, *Criticism and Social Change*. His ambition is to devise a Marxism responsive to the challenges posed for its theoretical foundations by the poststructuralist or deconstructionist critical theories that have been invading literary studies in the past decade and have more recently established footholds in philosophy and law.

These theories are threatening to traditional Marxism, as they are to any humanist philosophy. They refuse to consider the key terms of humanist discourse—"man," "freedom," "right," and so on—as anything more than ideological constructs. And they see language not as referring to the world, as a social theory that makes its claim on us by virtue of its truth-to-life must, but as referring simply to other language. Our interpretations "of the world," deconstructionism has it, are really interpretations of other interpretations, with no originating, preverbal ground in sight.

One way of putting the issue is to say that Lentricchia wants to rewrite Marx's 11th thesis on Feuerbach to read, "The philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways; by reinterpreting their interpretations, we can change it." And he is anxious to avoid the rewriting he thinks poststructuralism, in its current academic incarnation, would perform: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; and that is all that philosophers—or anyone else—can hope to do."

Lentricchia's advice to leftist intellectuals is to seize the means of representation. "Literature is inherently nothing," he writes near the end of his book; "or it is inherently a body of rhetorical strategies waiting to be seized. And anybody can seize them." The best equipped "anybody" turns out to be the academic intellectual, who is institutionally situated to exert an interpretive power over society's essential texts. The literary intellectual can best undertake the socially transformative work of textual appropriation, Lentricchia argues, by conceiving of his or her scholarly practice as a social activity: "genuine political work for the Henry James scholar, as Henry James scholar, becomes possible when contact is made with the activity of James's writing, with all possible emphasis on *act*."

This program will sound familiar: it belongs to the line of Marxist social criticism that includes Antonio Gramsci, Herbert Marcuse, and Louis Althusser. It finds a popularized echo in the motto of a kind of leftism current here and in France since the 1960s: if we remake ourselves, we will remake society.

II

BUT LENTRICCHIA COMPLICATES the argument by introducing into his discussion the skepticism poststructuralist thought has brought to bear on this optimistic view of society and the self. He thus undertakes to weigh the force of the questions contemporary critical theory has taught us to ask. How can any social theory justify its program without appealing to some essentialist view of history or human nature—without claiming to know what human beings "really are"? If society, as Michel Foucault would have it, is a totalization of power relations, how can intellectuals, socially accredited and institutionally integrated, stand apart from or outside these relations in order to criticize them? And how is the genuinely radical act, one that is not ironized by the determining pressures of

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an inescapable past, possible? If language, as Jacques Derrida would have it, is simply a deferral of meaning, signs referring us only to other signs, how can the text the leftist intellectual would appropriate be made to yield anything but evidence of its undecidability?

Lentricchia's designated spokesman for most of his discussion is Kenneth Burke, recommended here as a critic who since the 1930s has managed to sustain a socially astute criticism in full awareness of the complications that would be proposed, many years after the bulk of his criticism had been written, by such writers as Derrida and Foucault. And in the opposite corner, Lentricchia places Paul de Man, whose deconstructionist practice as a literary critic is understood to issue from the political quietism of a comfortable academic nihilism.

Lentricchia has shown himself to be a sharp critic of other people's theories in his well-known survey of contemporary theory, *After the New Criticism* (1980), and in a long essay on Foucault published two years ago in *Raritan*. Though he is, understandably, somewhat kinder to his own views, some readers may still find the poststructuralist counterarguments in *Criticism and Social Change* more compelling than the proposed critical program itself. Such is the force of deconstruction that all efforts to transcend its negations invariably end up looking like a tugging at the bootstraps.

Lentricchia's defense of Marxism against the critique implied by deconstructionist theories of language and by what he has called the "supermaterialism" of Foucault rests finally on a single theoretical move: a crossing of Marxism with pragmatism. The Marxist theory of history is valuable, he argues, not because it is the true description of how social change occurs, but for the pragmatist reason that it is good in the way of belief.

> [I]s Marxism "true"? [he asks.] Does it "correspond" to social reality? The answer is that . . . Marx created a picture which Marxists and many non-Marxist intellectuals today in the West respond to as if it were true, as if in fact this is where we live, what our history at bottom is all about. Marx's picture, in other words, is true not in the reflectionist terms in which it is often posed . . . but in the pragmatist sense that it has put many intellectuals into active and rich commerce with their society.

The consequence of this pragmatist turn is that Marxism becomes for Lentricchia's argument simply the name for "that which we all desire in the way of social relations," a thing that never requires substantiation since it derives its authority not from any verifiable correspondence to social actuality but from its rhetorical persuasiveness. Lentricchia calls this "Marx without science." Readers who recall the cautionary example in the preface to *The German Ideology* of the man who thought to eliminate the problem of drowning by convincing people that the idea of gravity was a superstition, will perhaps wonder where the Marx is.

III

On the face of it, nothing could be more antipathetic to the theoretical orientation of Lentricchia's book than Denis Donoghue's Reith Lectures, delivered on BBC radio in 1982 and reprinted with lengthy commentaries as *The Arts Without Mystery*.

In Donoghue's survey of the contemporary critical scene, *Ferocious Alphabets* (1981), which has recently been reissued by Columbia University Press, the bias clearly favors a kind of criticism that Derridean theory has declared obsolete. In this criticism the critic tries to come into contact, as in conversation, with the voice of the writer—as opposed to engaging in the free play of interpretation advocated by Derrida and Roland Barthes, for whom the notion of a coherent authorial voice in or behind the text constitutes a kind of metaphysical fraud. In Derridean criticism, Donoghue complained, "you must deprive the poem of its sacredness, its mystery. The critic must be a secularist."

Those who may have wondered whether Donoghue meant what he seemed to be implying in this sentence will, after *The Arts Without Mystery*, wonder no more:

> The reason why modern critics are embarrassed by the mysteriousness of art is that it threatens the purity of their secular status [Donoghue writes in this new book]. . . . They insist upon the assurance that nothing escapes their consciousness. If they sense that the work of art is indeed occult, they get away from it as quickly as possible.

And a few pages later he speaks of contemporary criticism's "undisguised revulsion against the sacred object, the original work of art."

The function whose usefulness we have frittered away—through the commercialization of the art world, the dissemination of pop culture, the politicizing of the art experience, interpretive relativism, and all the other things that are supposed to have made things so hard for high culture (when were they ever easy?)—is unabashedly Kantian: "With the arts, people can make a space for themselves, and fill it with intimations of freedom and presence."

The kind of transcendental status Donoghue would have us attribute to the art object is indicated succinctly by a passage in his introduction:

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While I was working on the Reith Lectures, two passages, one from St. Augustine, the other from E. M. Cioran, kept coming into my mind. From Augustine: "Whatever is understood by knowledge is limited by the understanding of the knowledge: even what can be called ineffable is not ineffable." From Cioran: "The indigence of language renders the universe intelligible."

The only conclusion I can draw from this is that if art is neither a language nor a form of knowledge, and if it is inaccessible to my language and my ways of knowing, then either the arts are inhuman or there is something less than human about the rest of my life.

IV

EVERY THEORY POSITS a privileged position from which its operations, so to speak, can be directed; that position is always occupied by the intellectual who has created the theory. Everyone else's theory becomes either a corroborating statement of the master theory or a symptom of the condition that it proposes to explain. What these two seemingly disparate books have in common, and the reason they could both spring from the same theory-saturated intellectual milieu, is the extraordinary intolerance they exhibit toward the theories and tastes of other people.

For there is one theoretical point at which these writers meet. It emerges when we put Donoghue's description of the art object—"the most available sign of an alternative life, an adversary image if the official life is understood as enforced social practice"—together with his description of himself: "I am a member of the middle class; in some respects I coincide with its official [?] interest, in other respects I am an alien within it." Art, it is clear, is the name for those cultural products that reinforce Donoghue's sense of himself as someone who is both inside and, when he desires to be, outside the walls that confine everyone else.

The consequences of this view become apparent in Donoghue's discussion of cultural pluralism—the proliferation of cultural objects in the modern world and the critical relativism that is understood to have accompanied it.

> The simultaneous order which Eliot invoked is a dream of order, and nothing more [Donoghue sadly acknowledges]. The proliferation of images from every known society can be felt as plenitude, but not as order. . . . Indeterminacy is an answer to proliferation; so is play; and so is the habit of voiding claims

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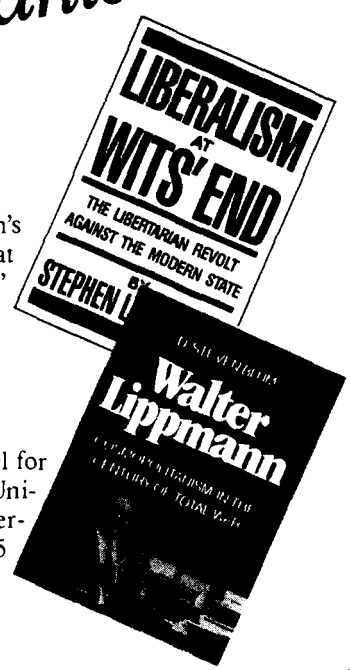

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upon our attention by declaring them all equally arbitrary.

The flood of ersatz art experiences—art in galleries, photography, rock music, television, postmodernist art of "whatever happens"—is attributed to a failure of the critical will, the will to assert discriminations and make value judgments. True art does not simply announce itself (this is, of course, one of the odd habits of transcendental phenomena); it requires an act of critical authority to distinguish itself from the fake.

V

Since Lentricchia is concerned to correct the notion that intellectuals can assume a position outside the social formation they presume to explain, but since he needs to make an argument that does not issue in despair, his management of this problem is somewhat more intricate. His position is most readily observed in the argument he makes to distinguish his kind of pragmatism from the Jamesian and Deweyan kind recently revised and promoted in two influential books by Richard Rorty. Rorty is right, Lentricchia allows, in wanting to change the course of Western intellectual conversation by getting rid of the fiction of a natural standpoint, some ahistorical a priori on which the conversation can be grounded. But, for Lentricchia, Rorty's brand of pragmatism seems to be a promise of "cacophony, a Babel-like chorus of unconstrained and incommensurable interpretation. Rorty's conversation sounds like no conversation at all."

Lentricchia's preferred version of the pragmatist conversation can be read, for instance, in this argument:

> It is precisely the radical instability (and appropriability) of terms like "rights" or "the people" that makes for transformation in philosophical or social history . . . when ruling discourse is seized and, in the name of ruling discourse, turned against the rulers.

This is pragmatism in the mode developed by Nietzsche: interpretation as the will to power. It is therefore not surprising that the single literary example in *Criticism and Social Change* is *Mein Kampf*. That book's greatness as literature—here Lentricchia is summarizing Burke's essay on Hitler's rhetoric—comes from its having offered "as an alternative to the many-voiced confusion of [the German] parliament (a 'vocal diaspora'), [Hitler's] single, mastering voice and presence, a unifying center interchangeable with Munich."

The example of Hitler is adduced as a caution, of course, a reminder to the intellectual to remain alertly self-critical of his own interpretive will to power. But nothing distinguishes Hitler's appropriation of the conversation from the sort Lentricchia would like leftist intellectuals to undertake except the consequences.

And what is the force that compels self-criticism, since it is the intellectual himself who is expected to exercise it? The answer is a strange one in this nonessentialist argument, and strangely familiar: the intellectual who fails to heal himself "will bring against [his] efforts the reactions of contempt which history always keeps waiting in the wings in readiness to expose false humanists." History, it turns out, has a dustbin.

VI

Donoghue and Lentricchia both want the conversation of criticism to continue—Donoghue on the old New Critical, neo-Kantian terms, Lentricchia in terms derived in explicit opposition to those of the New Criticism—but they want the vocabulary to be uniform and coherent, to be, in fact, their own. This is why in *Criticism and Social Change* everyone who is not a Marxist dialectician is an aesthetic trivializer or a "cultural dupe." And it is why Lentricchia and Donoghue both, with opposite ends in view, refer to the cultural history of the past 200 years as though its dominant figure were Walter Pater. If it can be made to appear that we have always submitted to a single shaping vocabulary in the past, perhaps we can be persuaded to submit to another in the future.

No matter which way the conversation goes, though, short of social disintegration, it will not become the Babel these critics fear. Ungrounded conversation is restricted by the same social actualities that restricted all the essentialist conversations in the past—the social actualities Lentricchia so often appeals to.

Cultural pluralism seems to me the best chance we have to insure, not that we get the society we want, but that we don't get the society someone else wants. Intellectuals might play a more positive role in the cultural life if, instead of exercising so much humility toward the objects of their cultural preference or the awesomeness of their historical task, they begin to exercise a little toward the preferences and tasks of their fellow women and men. □

COMING — IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

Northern Ireland: Ending the Troubles?
by Michael Rustin

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Robert Lekachman

Poverty in the Mind

THE IDEA OF POVERTY, by Gertrude Himmelfarb. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 595 pp. $25.00.

At the very beginning of this meticulous essay in intellectual history, Gertrude Himmelfarb employs Samuel Johnson and R. H. Tawney to make a point of importance, that attitudes toward the poor in England have changed less in the last two centuries than the remaining adherents to the Whig conception of history as a record of spreading enlightenment and social progress might be willing to concede. In 1770 that stalwart Tory Samuel Johnson, who after all knew something about poverty from first-hand experience, declared that "A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization." As an egalitarian socialist, R. H. Tawney was moved to insist in 1926 that "There is no touchstone, except the treatment of childhood, which reveals the true character of a social philosophy more clearly than the spirit in which it regards the misfortunes of those of its members who fall by the way."

The Tawney quotation is one of a very small number of references to the 20th century in 595 large pages. The subtitle, "England in the Early Industrial Age," accurately describes a volume that begins with Adam Smith and ends for the most part by 1860. In her promised sequel, Ms. Himmelfarb will deal with the emergence of the welfare state in England and the changes and continuities registered in political decisions to add illness, disability, and old age to poverty as misfortunes that merit public concern and public expenditure. There is a second reason why Ms. Himmelfarb has successfully resisted any temptation to draw tempting parallels between the debates that led to the New Poor Law Act of 1834, that monument to Malthus, and contemporary disputes in both England and the United States over definitions of poverty and appropriate policies to alleviate the condition. Her technique is one of immersion in her materials as part of a generally successful endeavor to see problems and proposals through 18th- or 19th-century rather than 20th-century eyes.

This is not to say that Ms. Himmelfarb doesn't

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stray from time to time into current controversies among historians. She is disposed to defend history from above against the claims of those who would write it from below. It would be helpful, of course, to listen to the authentic voices of the poor; but their situation has allowed them, long before the era of oral history, to create few written records.

The annals of the poor are composed by such journalists as Mayhew, novelists as Dickens, moral philosophers and economists as Smith, Malthus, and Mill, and the indispensable reports of Poor Law commissioners and Factory Act inspectors. The last category was one that Karl Marx in his years in the reading room of the British Museum found especially valuable. The historical materials that impart specificity and emotion to the abstractions of absolute and relative surplus value were usually derived from official documents.

AS CAN BE EXPECTED, Gertrude Himmelfarb is skeptical of attempts like that of E. P. Thompson to construct a "radical consensus," a "radical intellectual culture," and indeed a working class distinguished by sensibility and ideology from other classes. Although the 18th-century vocabulary of "orders," "ranks," "degrees," and "estates," and the sense of mutual dependency and obligation conjured up by the sense of connection among differently situated groups persisted into the 19th century and has not entirely vanished in the 20th, Ms. Himmelfarb, nevertheless, observes an increasing substitution of class language.

The influential political economists, and the new radicals in particular, deployed class concepts in pursuit of contrasting objectives. For the economists, class was connected with interest and contract, the comforting universe of maximization and markets, where they masterfully maneuvered the sacred categories of rent, capital, and labor. Poor people had simply entered into disadvantageous contracts. No one was to blame except the poor themselves. As for the radicals,

> If class relations were contractual rather than conventional, if the legitimizing principle of social behavior was interest rather than obligation, the constraints of the old order were no longer binding, and the most radical ideas about power and authority, property and equality could be advanced with impunity.

Ms. Himmelfarb suggests that the language of class became "common" in the 1830s and afterward.

Simple explanations displease this guide to the idea of poverty. Marxist interpretations of bourgeois analysis and proposals in terms of class interest do not convince her. For one thing, the intellectual bourgeoisie rarely agreed on anything of importance. For another, most of the men and women who live by the word deserve to be read as though they mean what they have written. Welfare as a technique of social control, in our day the thrust of the work of Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, among others,

> can be neither proved nor disproved, since it can account for anything and everything: the restriction of poor relief or its expansion, the provision of education for the poor or the failure to provide such education, the passage of a Ten Hours Bill or the defeat of that bill, a religious movement that catered to the poor or one that ignored the poor.

The tradition exemplified in this volume is that of intellectual conservatism: history is complicated. Human motivation is complex. Continuities are stronger than impatient radicals prefer to contemplate. Not much is new under the sun. Controversies over the treatment of the poor have a cyclical character.

THUS FAR, I have emphasized the general strategy of inquiry. It is impossible to evaluate its success until the next volume appears. I find it hard to believe in the English version of the welfare state as entirely a reiteration of historically familiar themes.

If the New Poor Law reformers and their successors did their best to separate those whom they were willing to define as poor from the working classes and subject them to a harsh workhouse regimen, British Liberals, Laborites, and socialists did their considerable best in this century to universalize benefits, among them medical care, housing, and income maintenance. Still, I should be wrong to underestimate Ms. Himmelfarb's intellectual virtuosity and scholarly resourcefulness.

The bulk of the text consists of a series of frequently brilliant separate essays. Part One contrasts the generous vision of Adam Smith with the harsh rhetoric of Thomas Robert Malthus. Smith believed in ordinary people. Give them the opportunities available in a free economy and, out of ordinary self-interest, they will eagerly grasp them. Malthus worried about overpopulation, food shortages, and the profligate tendencies of the lower orders. For much of the first half of the 19th century, the mean Malthusian vision was more influential than Smith's optimism about expanding economies.

Others in the cast of characters include Thomas Carlyle, a radical Tory, William Cobbett, a radical populist, Friedrich Engels who turned the poor into

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proletarians, Henry Mayhew who in four volumes categorized the street people of London, Charles Dickens, and such lurid popular novelists as William Harrison Ainsworth and G. W. M. Reynolds who made their readers' flesh creep with tales of horrible crimes and sordid practices in the London slums. I should have thought that John Stuart Mill, about whom Ms. Himmelfarb has eloquently written elsewhere, deserved a chapter or at least a substantial section to himself. I should have devoted rather more space also to Jeremy Bentham, about whom she has also written extensively.

The materials are endless. No wonder that Ms. Himmelfarb's hopes of telling her story in a single volume proved implausible. As intellectual history, the separate parts of the book can be read with pleasure and profit by anyone at all interested in the 19th century. We shall see how successful the enterprise is as a whole when the next volume emerges. □

Rose Laub Coser

Women in American Society

MORE WORK FOR MOTHER: THE IRONIES OF HOUSEHOLD TECHNOLOGY FROM THE OPEN HEARTH TO THE MICROWAVE, by Ruth Schwartz Cowan. New York: Basic Books. 257 pp., $17.95

It is hard to believe: American women spend about as much time on housework today as they did one or two centuries ago. In the 18th century, to take an example, when fine wheat flour replaced homegrown corn and rye in most households, not only was the simple process of baking bread with cornmeal replaced by a much more complex process of baking white bread, but baking pies became fashionable—to the point where at the beginning of the 19th century French travelers, who were, after all, used to good cuisine, praised New England's "cake-inventive housewives and daughters." True, a new gadget, the eggbeater, relieved some of the burden, but at the same time angel-food cakes became popular. Since this meant that yolks and whites had to be beaten separately, the work was doubled.

It will be objected that though this is a good story—don't we know that work multiplies to fill the time that is available?—some labor must have been saved in the changeover from local gristmill to factory-produced flour. Indeed! But the labor saved was that of men and children, for the hand-grinding and hauling of grain to the local mill had traditionally been men's work.

IT IS RARE that a scholarly book is so much fun to read. Historian Ruth Schwartz Cowan is a meticulous researcher, a gifted writer, and a sophisticated interpreter. She shows systematically how the work process in the home is closely linked to the economy. Conveying vividly how people of different social classes actually *lived* in different periods of our recent history, she helps the reader experience the misery of the poor and the drudgery of the better-off. Her work is original in the way she takes us into the households as she interprets the link between family life and the stage of the economy. In the process she also shows the intimate connection between various stages of industrialization and household techniques. Her book deals implicitly with more than American society and explains why processes similar to those she describes have been at work throughout the industrial world.

Cowan destroys the myth that the most important things are going on in the "outside" world, and in the "hard" world of steel and coal at that. In the 19th century metals and textiles did not dominate American industry; the production of flour did. By 1860 "the value of its product was $249 million, more than twice [that] of the . . . cotton industry ($107 million) and three times that of iron and steel ($73 million)." Generally, in the social sciences, household items are seen at best as objects of profit and at worst as objects of consumerism—for which women get blamed. Even Ruth Cowan herself slips into the trap of blaming consumerism on the housewives' unwillingness to leave home and hearth for outside work so that they might help the family reach the high-status standards symbolized by new household technology. She forgets that other writers today are blaming women for wanting to go to work because they want extra money to buy "gadgets"—a case of being damned if they do and damned if they don't.

Yet Cowan shows the immense improvement in living conditions, and she notes that much time was saved with the introduction of plumbing and electricity. While women give to the household as much time as their mothers and grandmothers did,

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she notes the decrease in spent energy, the increase in comfort, hygiene, and health in all social classes —that is, in the general standard of living, including that of the poor.

Too often the time that was saved with new inventions served only the men and children. The cast-iron stove, an early invention, saved the men half of the work of hauling, cutting, and splitting wood—whereas the labor involved in cooking, which was women's work, was vastly increased, since the stove meant the end of one-pot and one-dish meals that had traditionally been prepared on the open hearth, not to speak of the cleaning and washing that the stove needed—also women's work. Cowan concludes that "Merchant flour, cast-iron stoves, municipal water, and manufactured boots did not free women from their labors.... Angel-food cakes, strawberry preserves, clean clothes, ironed ruffles, and leavened bread may have made life easier and pleasanter for their families, but they also kept women working at home...."

I find the book's first three chapters the most exciting ones, perhaps because they bring us material that is not familiar, and because here a good historian makes us relive the past. But Cowan's analysis of modern times is also exciting. Take transportation as an example. It is worthwhile reproducing the caption below one of the book's delightful sets of pictures:

> In times gone by, all kinds of goods and services came right to your door. Peddlers visited farmhouses, horsedrawn wagons delivered groceries or trundled vegetables or pots and pans up and down city streets, pushcarts brought all kinds of goods right to the curb, laundry could be picked up and delivered, and even doctors made house calls. Although you might have used your first automobile just for fun, before many years had passed you would have been using it every day for domestic chores. As the years passed and suburbia spread, delivery services disappeared, and you would have hardly been able to run a household without a car, performing services that retailers had once offered, and chores—such as picking children up at school—that had never existed before.

The work of men and children had already been separated from the home during the first phase of industrialization (in the 19th century). Once the production of market goods became more centralized in the next phase (the 20th century), the productive household-work process remained individualized, with the women keeping up, or trying to obtain, middle-class living standards all by themselves, while the men were freed for work outside the home and the children freed for school.

To sum up: In today's household women do jobs that men and boys used to do—such as handling the garbage disposal, dealing with repair people. They do the errands, transport family members as well as necessities that, earlier, mail-order or peddlers' deliveries had brought to the house. With the help of machines, women now process the laundry from hamper to washer to dryer to folding. Servants no longer assist in the heavy work, are no longer available mornings and nights for some peace of mind at crucial hours.

In a separate chapter Cowan discusses the "servant problem" in this country—the fact that, because of demographic factors and the persistent process of industrialization, women over the years have increasingly refused to go into household service, even though the wages might be better than in low-skill-level industry. The reason: the unlimited working hours and total dependency on the employer. Cowan implies that the family as an institution is what Lewis Coser has called a "greedy institution," demanding total commitment on the part of at least one person, the housekeeper. In our modern, industrial society people object to "greedy institutions" because labor now is a segmented activity that leaves people free from subordination to the source of authority after a set number of hours and days. Only wives and mothers, as Talcott Parsons noted years ago, still accept such an imposition on their time. As both the rising divorce rate and the women's movement now show, they are beginning to resent it.

Had Cowan, who in other respects is familiar with sociological interpretations, known about the concept of "greedy institutions," she could have used it to explain another phenomenon to which she devotes many pages—the fact that collective solutions to the problem of housekeeping have failed. It is not just that people find it hard to get along with one another, but that communes of any kind, especially the ones she describes, are also "greedy institutions" that demand the total allegiance of their members, and expect more time and engagement than the participants feel is legitimate.

In general, however, Cowan shows sophistication in dealing with sociological issues. While recognizing the nature of the capitalist-patriarchal system, she also knows that other social dynamics are at work—that American men and women will not agree to any alternatives that seem to threaten family life as they understand it, with the full-time devotion of the wife-mother. In this she joins her colleague, the historian Carl Degler, who has shown that equality of women in American society

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has foundered on the hard rock of demands for their full commitment to the family. And this is why, after all, the Equal Rights Amendment was defeated, while its implications were misunderstood by the voting population. It is all the more surprising that at the end of the book the author suggests as a solution to the enormous problems she has depicted so dramatically that we throw fewer T-shirts into the washing machine. It is too bad that she ends her bang-up exposition with a whimper.□

Michael R. Marrus

Opposition to the Nazis

POPULAR OPINION AND POLITICAL DISSENT IN THE THIRD REICH: BAVARIA 1933–1945, by Ian Kershaw. Oxford and New York: Clarendon/Oxford University Press. 450 pp. $49.50.

The jacket of this book presents an image that its text carefully challenges: a 1937 photograph of a Munich street shows a crowd ecstatically saluting Nazi leaders on parade; underlining the apparent conformity, two small children ape their elders, ranged beside a scowling storm trooper. "*Deutschland ist Hitler!*" Rudolf Hess shouted at a Nazi party rally about this time. This propaganda view still is largely accepted: the Germans overwhelmingly backed the Hitlerian regime.

We shall never be able to test this hypothesis precisely, but we can correct the easy impressions of unanimity concocted by Goebbels and his propaganda impresarios. In this book, Ian Kershaw of Manchester University looks at Germans behind the scenes—"the muddled majority, neither full-hearted Nazis nor outright opponents, whose attitudes . . . betray signs of Nazi ideological penetration and yet show the clear limits of propaganda manipulation." How can we ever know what such people thought? Kershaw draws mainly upon two sources: first, on confidential reports from the Social Democratic party underground and left-wing opponents of the regime who until the outbreak of war regularly sent assessments to the West; second, on Nazi evaluations prepared by officials who kept close watch on civilian attitudes.

Kershaw limits his description to the largely Catholic province of Bavaria, the cradle of nazism, because most of the government material there survived the war. His conclusions are qualified, but they suggest nevertheless that what Goebbels attempted was never fully realized. Germans remained divided by nazism, and never gave themselves entirely to the regime. At the same time, they seldom concerned themselves with public affairs or the deeper issues posed by a criminal society. Kershaw's Germans indeed may appear disturbingly *normal*—which the author himself may have noted when he reflected in his preface: "I should like to think that had I been around at the time I would have been a convinced anti-Nazi engaged in the underground resistance fight. However, I know really that I would have been as confused and felt as helpless as most of the people I am writing about."

Kershaw's quest for Bavarian public opinion concentrated upon a search for "critical, nonconformist, *dissenting* strands." This raises methodological problems, since the book plainly purports to do more than merely relay a portion of popular attitudes. Nevertheless, the strands of protest are hardly rarities, and they help us to elucidate other dimensions of popular opinion.

Reports include a litany of complaints against the Nazis, some of them no different from those made about any government. Peasants grumbled about the marketing of egg and milk products—often, for them, the very essence of the new "system" imposed from Berlin. Small farmers, a mainstay of support for Hitler before 1933, blamed the state for labor shortages and rising agricultural wages by the end of the decade. Industrial workers lamented the sharpened distinctions among social classes, worsening labor conditions, and harsh repression of workers' organizations. Lower-middle-class groups, important in supporting nazism before Hitler became chancellor, bemoaned high taxes, large-scale enterprises, and bureaucratic meddling, as they had always done. Only the crushing of communism remained their great consolation, and this inevitably wore thin in the face of war, shortages, and aerial bombardments.

People expressed grievances in various ways, ranging from demoralization at the workplace to open demonstrations. Repression could not be everywhere at once, and at times was not thought worth the trouble. Therefore, discontent surfaced. Once it emerged, the regime usually cracked down.

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Between 15,000 and 20,000 Bavarians were interned in 1933 alone, mainly Socialist and Communist workers, and the danger of being sent to Dachau increased after Goebbels's declaration of Total War in 1943. Thousands paid for their grumbling in concentration camps or even worse; but others were either ignored, intimidated into silence, or bought off by Nazi functionaries. Generally, discontent did not produce active opposition.

Discontent with particular policies was often counterbalanced by satisfaction with other aspects of the Third Reich. One must keep in mind the undoubted popularity of Nazi successes, possibly slighted in this book.

By mid-1936 most unemployed Germans were back at work and material conditions improved despite growing shortages and rising food prices. Following the *Blitzkrieg* victories in the spring and summer of 1940, public confidence in the Nazis experienced a powerful boost, however short-lived. Support for these gifts of the Führer coexisted with antagonisms caused by other aspects of nazism, and people could be ambivalent about politics in the Third Reich just as they are everywhere else.

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NOWHERE IS THIS JARRING NORMALITY more evident than in the extensive discussion of popular opinion on the persecution and murder of the Jews. There were relatively few Jews in Bavaria, about 42,000 in 1933 or 0.55 percent of the population. Anti-Semitism, as we know, can easily exist without Jews. Yet the indifference of the population to the "Jewish question" is nevertheless striking, considering the Nazis' emphasis. There were some centers of anti-Semitism, notably Protestant Middle Franconia, under the influence of the rabble-rousing Julius Streicher. But from the beginning, activity against Jews—arson, violence, boycotts, discrimination—was mainly the work of zealous party men rather than of the general population.

The deportation and the murder of German Jews occurred in darker times, beginning in the autumn of 1941, when the war began to go badly for Germany. Although very few Bavarians knew details of the Final Solution, and information about extermination camps was virtually nonexistent, there were certainly rumors about mass shootings and other atrocities; not to mention the physical disappearance of the Jews from many localities. Remarkable as it may seem, Bavarian opinion seems not to have occupied itself with the Jews. Far more important were the worsening conditions of life at home, the gloomy news from the front, and the fear of Allied retribution should the Reich be defeated. Churchmen were generally silent, reflecting the widespread lack of concern about the issue. Although the Nazis succeeded in murdering the Jews largely without German resistance, they failed to mobilize the entire population on behalf of anti-Semitism. "The road to Auschwitz," Kershaw writes, "was built by hate, but paved with indifference."

THE ONE AREA where discontent flared into open opposition was the Nazis' assault upon various forms of Christian religious practice. Having moved away from the evangelical piety of the Protestant minority and the unusually vital Catholic church in Bavaria, the regime had to clash with the established Christian churches. Clergymen were scandalized, for example, by the pornographic appeals of Streicher's violently anti-Jewish newspaper *Der Stürmer*, which mingled denunciations of Jews with lascivious cartoons and articles illustrating sexual perversions. Local Nazi leaders, energized by the racial-nationalist and "spiritual" side of the movement, resented the influence of clergymen, their recalcitrance on some aspects of racist dogma, and attempted to substitute the ideology of the regime for traditional religion. More

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than anything else, this aggressive Nazi proselytizing raised the ire of local populations.

Protestants were outraged when, in 1934, Nazi thugs forcibly deposed and arrested an orthodox archconservative Lutheran, Hans Meiser, head of the Bavarian Protestant church. Within a few weeks, facing a storm of protest, Hitler himself had to back down and reinstate this champion of provincial religious independence from Berlin.

Bavarian Catholics were even more strenuous and more persistent in their confrontation with the Nazi order. A crisis arose in 1941, when the regime launched a series of attacks upon the churches in the province. Symbolic of the confrontation that year was the effort of an ardent Nazi official to remove crucifixes from the schools and otherwise to extend the Nazification of the educational system. There followed a storm of unrest. According to Kershaw "the extent of civil disobedience during these months was greater than at any previous time during the Third Reich in Bavaria." Spontaneously, villagers and townspeople marched and disturbed the peace, subverted the new regulations, and assailed Nazi authorities. Once again, the police state backed down. The crucifixes remained on the walls. Party activists were isolated, and Hitler apparently intervened, having recognized that the further alienation of opinion was too high a price to pay for a few thousand crosses.

One should not draw the wrong conclusions from such incidents. Catholics succeeded in 1941, as Protestants did in 1934, because the issues at stake were not fundamental to the Hitlerian order. In both cases demonstrators were prepared to live with nazism once their particular grievance had been settled. There is no sign that Hitler's personal standing weakened notably over these issues. Protesters, moreover, focused their campaigns on specific, achievable objectives, and in both situations mentioned here the Führer was able to chastise a subordinate while yielding at no significant cost. These cases of opposition, in short, could not be models for wider protest.

What we can say is that for all its criminality, terror, and demonic energy, nazism failed to dragoon the public into complete conformity. The Reich drew for its support upon a hard core of believers, but also on a huge pool of the indifferent, the shallow-minded, the otherwise preoccupied masses who only occasionally thought about "politics." Kershaw's keen glimpse of Nazi Germany is therefore not a look at a strange planet, inhabited by historical oddities or deviants. It is a more familiar vision than we might comfortably wish it to be. □

Henry C. Fleisher

Socialism in Europe

LEFT OF CENTER: EUROPEAN LABOR SINCE WORLD WAR II, by Adolf Sturmthal. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 302 pp. $21.95.

In October 1983 the *Wall Street Journal* commented, with obvious pleasure, that "the idea called socialism is dead." France, "the advanced country that took socialism most at its word, has seen the 'future' and even its intellectuals have acknowledged it doesn't work." Soon afterward the *Journal* called M. Mitterrand "the best thing to happen to Italy in years," because his record in office had led "his socialist colleague, Bettino Craxi" to steer clear of a socialist program that in any way resembled that of the French Socialists.

Adolf Sturmthal, a veteran and close student of the European socialist movement since his youth, is perhaps in a better position than the *Wall Street Journal* to decide whether European socialism is ready for last rites. In this new study Sturmthal analyzes the process through which the European Socialist parties have moved from a platform of socializing the means of production to one absorbed with more immediate goals: wages, health care, pensions, adequate education, and greater democracy in the workplace. Socialism, he concludes, is obviously not dead; but it has changed greatly. And, he cautions, if the era of full employment is over for the foreseeable future, the programs of the labor and socialist parties may very well become more radical than they have been in most of the postwar era.

"For the time being," Sturmthal concludes, "John Maynard Keynes, or some variation of his theory, has won out over Karl Marx in most Western labor movements. A mixed, predominantly capitalistic society is likely to persist for a long time to come."

Sturmthal examines efforts to provide a greater influence for unions and their members: codetermination, collective bargaining, a governmental incomes policy. Perhaps because Sweden receives, unfortunately, only passing attention in his study, Sturmthal all but ignores the random efforts by labor and management to "humanize the workplace" through rearrangement of functions and schedules on the assembly line, or to solicit worker

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involvement for a more humane and productive job environment.

Codetermination, Sturmthal finds, works "quite effectively" in some of the countries as an instrument of conflict management; he is quite right that it "remains to be seen" whether codetermination actually gives rank-and-file workers a "sense of participation in managerial decision-making." Long-term full employment did make obsolete the earlier notion that collective bargaining was a private matter for the participants. Instead, "economic policy-making became the result of arrangements among corporate powers . . . unions, farmers, consumers' groups, and the government."

A new element in both the economic and political sectors, Sturmthal argues, is a "steady blurring of the boundaries between the classes," while simultaneously "a subproletariat of foreign workers has become the main victim of discrimination," whose interests the labor movements have, by and large, shown only a limited willingness or ability to serve. While many of the "guest" laborers have returned to their native countries, significant numbers still remain. They have a long road to travel before they are accepted as resident members of the work force in their host countries.

Sturmthal takes note of the impact of all these economic and political phenomena on the West European Communist parties. Confronted by the new prosperity and new thinking among European workers, and the unpleasant actions of the Soviet Big Brother, they zig-zagged through a series of "Eurocommunist" experiments and a constantly changing pattern of public positions. Sturmthal is willing to accept a thesis that the leaders of many of these parties would prefer to escape the embarrassment of dependence on the Kremlin. Nevertheless, the Eurocommunist parties offer little basis for trust in their new approaches "since major policy decisions are not anchored in an expression of rank-and-file sentiment," and thus "are easily reversible."

ONE RESULT of these past years of full employment that had significant impact on the leadership of the entire left, Sturmthal observes, "was a greater opening of educational opportunities and consequent mobility of talented people . . . and the concomitant rebellion of minorities against systems of discrimination that interfere with the advancement of talented men and women from minority ranks."

The old-time proletariat was changing. The Austrian Socialist party, which, after World War I, was widely regarded as "the shining model of a modern interpretation of Marxism," acknowledged that its constituency included not only "workers" but "intellectuals, scientists, and technicians, as well as . . . progressive managers and entrepreneurs in trade, artisans, and [people in] agriculture who earn their living by their own work." The 1955 Bad Godesberg declaration of the German Social Democrats recognized the lack of interest in the old program of socialization of industry. And the British Labour party's drive for socialization of basic industries rapidly lost momentum.

In this process of broadening from reasonably unified labor-socialist parties to "people's parties," the "pressure for revolutionary or even simply radical changes" became minimal. In achieving greater equality of opportunity, a higher degree of social mobility, and further extensions of democratic rights, the socialist movements brought desirable victories to their constituencies—"but not socialism." The process, Sturmthal acknowledges, has been interpreted, in the words of Daniel Bell, as "the end of ideology"; but Sturmthal argues that "does not mean the end of social conflict." It does turn the struggle into a scene of "pragmatic strife in which the issues are less exciting for the histo-

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rian of ideas but no less consequential in terms of human lives. . . ."

Sturmthal, however, hedges his bets. If the present era of heavy unemployment continues, if issues involving the environment and the assorted dangers of nuclear power and nuclear weapons are not soon resolved, then we are apt to see "more active and fundamental opposition to the existing social order, which would then better reflect the mood of large numbers of people threatened by the economic decline. . . ."

WILL ANY OF THIS lead toward what was traditionally regarded as socialism? Indeed, will the socialist parties survive, with or without a "socialist" ideology? Wisely, Sturmthal offers the cautionary advice of the late Sam Goldwyn: it is difficult to make forecasts, especially about the future.

Like his much earlier volume, *The Tragedy of European Labor*, which analyzed the failures of the European left to avert fascism, nazism, and war, Sturmthal's *Left of Center* is written with sympathy and understanding for the aspirations of the labor and socialist movements of Europe. □

Josephine Woll

A Voice for Russia

Writers in Russia, 1917–1978, by Max Hayward. Edited and with an Introduction by Patricia Blake. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 340 pp. $22.95.

Max Hayward is something of a legendary figure in the field of Russian letters. He translated Pasternak, Sinyavsky, Nadezhda Mandelstam, Isaac Babel, and many others. Together with the editor of this volume, Patricia Blake, he attuned Western ears to the "dissonant" voices in the Russian chorus of post-Stalinist writing. An extraordinary linguist, he mastered—or, in the more literally accurate Russian word, *usvoil* ("made his own")—upward of a dozen languages, including Romany, Welsh, and Hungarian. And his Russian was so good that anecdotes—like the one in which a Soviet visitor to England took Hayward, a Yorkshireman, for a colleague, while Hayward took the Soviet for an emigré, with predictably hilarious results—are commonplace. When he died, aged 55, in 1979, the combative, disputatious world of Russian scholars, students, and emigrés joined together in mourning the loss of a greatly talented and beloved man.

Not every essay in this volume is golden but none is dross, and most are very good indeed. The first part of the book includes a survey of prerevolutionary Russian cultural history, two overviews of Soviet literature since the Revolution, an examination of the history and posthistory of "socialist realism." The second part focuses on individual writers: Pasternak, Akhmatova, Sinyavsky, Solzhenitsyn.

The pieces comprising the first part are uniformly competent, if not particularly original: they read like what they were, introductions to anthologies, intended for readers with relatively little knowledge of the subjects and providing those readers with thorough, intelligent, accurate *précis*.

These essays display Hayward's gift for lucid concision, which comes only from an impressive breadth and depth of knowledge. In "The Russian Empire," for instance, Hayward discusses the 17th-century schism in the Russian Orthodox church—a matter that seems, to most students, simultaneously arcane and trivial, the mixture symbolized in such apparent irrelevancies as whether one made the sign of the Cross with two fingers or three. In a few lines Hayward delineates what was really at stake, and why people were prepared to die for a finger. With similar compression he cuts to the very heart of Peter the Great's paradoxical Westernization of Russia:

> Forcing his subjects to ape the ways of Europe, he violated Europe's very spirit. . . . The wholesale importation of the material and cultural benefits of the Renaissance—in which Russia had not partaken—was carried out in such a way as to make a mockery of the humanism at the basis of them.

This essay is distinguished throughout by such lapidary explanations of highly complex social developments—and they give the distinct impression of stemming from a mind crammed full of erudition but self-confident enough to dispense with the footnotes.

HAYWARD'S ESSAYS ON SOVIET LITERATURE are informed by the same qualities, the writing perhaps a shade drier but shot through here and there with glints of individuality. One such glint is an almost

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off-hand comment he makes while discussing the importance of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* when he rightly distinguishes it from most post-Stalin prose:

> Even the best [of it] tends to rely in considerable degree for its literary effect on the reader's awareness of the peculiar social and political context in which it is written. . . . Without the knowledge that it is written in defiance of certain previously imposed standards, and that a challenge to them still involves difficulties or hazards for the author, one would lose the odd sense of tension which Soviet literature derives from its nonliterary context.

Few have said it as well, none better. It is in the pieces on individual authors that Hayward writes best. On Anna Akhmatova he offers wise, judicious comment; on Andrei Sinyavsky (three of whose books he discusses) he is incisive and penetrating; on Solzhenitsyn and the like-minded men whose essays formed *From Under the Rubble* he is dispassionate. And on Pasternak, for whom he had a special love, he is positively brilliant.

Patricia Blake, in her introductory essay, describes the first fortuitous intersection of Hayward's life with Pasternak's: in a coincidence that could come straight off the pages of *Dr. Zhivago,* Hayward, in the mid-1940s, happened to rent a room in a house in Oxford belonging to Pasternak's sister, Lydia Slater. It began a 20-year association, intellectual and personal, extending even after Pasternak's death, when reprisals were inflicted on Pasternak's mistress Olga Ivinskaya and her daughter, and Hayward campaigned on their behalf.

Two essays in this book deal with Pasternak. One served as an introduction to Alexander Gladkov's memoirs, *Meetings with Pasternak,* and the second introduced Ivinskaya's memoirs in Hayward's translation. Hayward saw Pasternak only once, when he was a third secretary at the British Embassy in Moscow—and then from a distance. It was a famous evening in 1948. Pasternak, expected by the authorities to read verses excoriating Western warmongering, did not merely confound such expectations but nearly provoked a public demonstration when he read his earlier, well-known and well-loved poetry.

Assessing Pasternak's moral role in Soviet literary history, Hayward almost inadvertently illuminates Pasternak's poetry:

> Pasternak stood at the center of a perpetually astonishing universe, and his poetry is the tale of how, in all its diversity, it related to himself, the only fixed and immutable point. It was this "self-centeredness," as much as his natural integrity, which made him impervious—though not indifferent—to the terrors and temptations of the age.

Hayward's understanding of Pasternak's conceptions of time and eternity, of the former as the stuff of history and the latter the stuff of poetry, and of the irreconcilable antagonism between politicians, the men who "make history," and poets, "the temporal representative[s] of eternity," is profoundly true. And his defense of *Dr. Zhivago,* while it can be challenged, is reasoned and proceeds from an infinitely well-informed sympathy for Pasternak as poet, novelist, and man.

HAYWARD WAS AN OUTSTANDING LINGUIST. Perhaps, then, the games of literary dissection that go by such names as semiotics and deconstructivism might have amused him. But I would venture to guess that they would more likely have seemed to him degrading to literature. In every essay in this book, as well as in pieces of his that are not included in this volume, Hayward approaches a subject—a book, an author, an era—as a complicated combination of history, politics, language, emotions and ideas, which can be separated only arbitrarily.

Reading Hayward on Pasternak or Akhmatova, one understands not merely the text of their work, but the texture that is the product of a man or a woman living in a certain society in a particular epoch, growing up with certain values, speaking certain languages, reading certain books. The integrity of the whole seems to have been of paramount importance to Max Hayward, and his writings are convincing testimony that he was right. I finished this book envious of those people who had the luck to know him personally—but glad, at least, that the rest of us have this opportunity to make his acquaintance. □

Re: Letters

• Dissent *welcomes letters, but we must ask that they be kept within bounds, about 225 words. They must be typed, double-spaced, and carry the full address and name of the sender. We reserve the right to edit letters down to fit our space and to choose which shall be printed. Letters will not be returned to senders unless they are accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.*

• *Thank you for your kind cooperation.* □

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LETTERS

Jobs and Economic Growth

Editors:

I was impressed by Bob Kuttner's article, "Jobs," in the Winter 1984 *Dissent*. I was struck by the boldness and simplicity of the "procurement" approach to full employment and economic growth. Pointing first to the experience of World War II—when, through government procurement contracts, not only the military but the civilian economy as well received an unprecedented growth stimulus—Kuttner provokes the reader into imagining what could be done if useful goods were produced by such a method instead of tanks and bombs. He also suggests that the government did not do all that bad a job coordinating the effort, and that the high rates of spending, and the nagging inefficiencies, were more than amply compensated for by the fantastic rates of economic development attained.

I would add that Kuttner's solution takes a long step beyond the currently prevailing "industrial policy" proposals. The AFL–CIO executive board speaks of a short-term stimulus, through infrastructure repair, aimed at bridging the gap until the private recovery takes shape. The debate in the Democratic party has been almost entirely dominated by investment strategy, oriented toward enhanced market penetration by a new, flexible U.S. industry. The model here is MITI of Japan, tough, far-sighted, and a function of world-market trends. Finally, many left-liberal industrial-policy theoreticians would probably cringe at the suggestion that NASA and the Pentagon have been archetypical nonmarket procurement-planning bodies whose operations might be usefully studied.

The World War II mobilization was clearly significant. It was highly successful, technically and organizationally, and it was informed from the start by an active, interested population whose creative potential could be tapped through teamwork and planning. There was a high degree of political unity. And the same could be said for the NASA-led space program; there has been a broad national consensus, and a more than passive intellectual and political participation by the population at large. An entire generation of Americans has gained from the public interest in science and technology spurred by the program. There is now an openness and orientation to the great potential available to us in new technologies—we are, as a whole, less susceptible to mythology and dogma as a result.

Political unity cut through what might otherwise have been significant obstacles to economic progress in those cases, but a question is raised for the "procurement" theory: where must we move now to secure a similar level of political consensus and active public involvement? After World War II further government procurement efforts failed, as in the famous collapse of the ambitious postwar housing construction program. The government could not compete with a private economy fueled by savings and capital availability.

Another example can be found in the New Deal period. In a period of high unemployment it was relatively easy to organize teams of workers to build new "pioneer villages" to be lived in and maintained by the team workers and their families. The values of "community" and "cooperation" were extolled. Yet as soon as the economy showed the slightest signs of recovery, the workers began gradually to return to the "home" town and into the private-sector opportunities they thought might enhance their life styles.

Some strategies for procurement-based development will not work—Carter's alternative-energy industry is one example; others will. Rebuilding the great cities of the Northeast and Midwest will work. The private sector cannot do it under any circumstances, and yet the people living in or near these areas understand the great potential—social, economic, and cultural—of urban life. They do not really want to move into the wasteland sprawled along the fringes of metropolitan areas. Perhaps we have here a true political consensus and a basis for popular mobilization.

A second major question involves the *continuity* of production and employment. Auto manufacturers know that cars must be replaced after a few years. The same is true for most consumer goods. How would a computer for every classroom, a procurement area suggested by Kuttner, be part of a sustained reemployment effort in the electronics area? Building new subway cars would also be a great thing, but what kind of jobs would subway riders be going to: useful, productive jobs at decent wages, or marginal service jobs? The procurement plan must be deep and broad enough to ensure that people will be going to jobs that will build even better mass transit systems.

Surely, Kuttner wants us to do more than submit "wish lists" of goods to be produced. I think that the redevelopment of the large urban metropolises provides the best opportunity for full, constructive employment and sustained growth. But this requires much political work, and a task-oriented, nuts-and-bolts debate about particulars. We must avoid corporatist mistakes, and we must realize that processes are under way that are reshaping our urban community. We must actively involve labor, minorities, and urban high schools and colleges. *Dissent* and other journals should provide a forum for this debate—on a NASA-style procurement strategy for our economy and our cities—perhaps in the context of rebuilding the Democratic party constituency and winning over a few key members of Congress to the idea.

There is, finally, the question of centralization vs. decentralization. I believe the materials, labor, and energy requirements of reconstruction will be immense, especially in the light of the continuity of progress. This will require a great deal of centralized command and control, and a vast division of labor. It will also require centralizing types of technology. Could conservation

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and decentralized solar grids really do the trick? Could organic food faddists and protectors of small, rare wildlife have led the war mobilization in the '40s? We cannot compromise with fear of centralization, bureaucracy, and technology. An active, involved, continuously educated population can make these things work for us, and in a fashion that would make the paternalist American corporations, MITIs, and Soviet Five-Year Plans fade from memory.

I hope *Dissent* takes up the challenge of procurement-based employment, and encourages debate around the "centralization" and "soft-hard" questions.

HENRY MOSS
Bronx, New York □

BOB KUTTNER Replies

Bravo to Henry Moss for advancing the full-employment discussion. He identifies precisely the right difficult issues.

How to generate the political consensus for the full production/full employment strategy whose technical feasibility is so obvious.

How to build in countercyclical labor-market stabilizers, so that a sudden drop in demand for, say, autos doesn't suddenly displace thousands of workers. (The Swedes have done very well at devising a system of sabbaticals, shared "short-time," anticipation of redundancies, early retirement, and so on, to take up the periodic slack.) What are American counterparts that would make sense given our political economy?

How to decide, as a society, what to produce, in the absence of an overarching wartime consensus.

And, how to democratize both decision-making and execution of a full production strategy, so that it doesn't end up looking like the Synfuels corporation.

Nothing is more important for the democratic left than to think through the details of a full-production economy, and its politics. Henry Moss is right. There is no better place than *Dissent* to take up that challenge. The answers will take time and careful thought, but we have the advantage of beginning with the right questions. □

Women and Poverty

Editors:

Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven's "The Feminization of Poverty" in the Spring 1984 *Dissent* is an opening sally in the debate as to whether full employment or the further elaboration of the welfare state serves the best long-term interests of America's poor women and children.

The thrust of their argument, spelled out further in Ehrenreich's pointedly titled "Will Work Aid Women?" in the *Democratic Left* (March–April 1984) is that "women's work" does not provide an adequate family wage and therefore we must transcend our employment demands and instead enlarge the social-welfare programs on which women (and children) so heavily depend. (Imagine someone urging us to respond to low wages for *men* in this way—to give up on the goal of full employment for adequate wages and fight instead for more Food Stamps, health services, and welfare!)

In order to argue that there is now a critical mass of impoverished women who can serve as the vanguard for expanding the welfare state, they treat a statistical category—female poverty—as a unified entity. The data they draw on are by now woefully familiar. Like most others who analyze the "feminization of poverty," they compress women in diverse situations into this new rubric. Long-term, never-married welfare mothers; recently divorced mothers from throughout the class structure (including many, especially among whites, who are likely to remarry and be again part of two-earner, male-and-female headed families); and women working at low-level service jobs supplementing their low wages with Food Stamps and other government programs—all these are thrown together in this statistical melange. The authors thus ignore the distinct personal and class-cultural histories of women whose lives may be similar at a particular moment but whose broader life chances differ substantially.

The low level of women's wages and the fact that women are the majority of welfare-state program recipients and workers lead (mislead) the authors to conclude that we should forget about that stale old jobs/income equation and simply expand the number and kind of welfare-state programs. But this raises more problems than it solves.

It is not only the right that fears the debilitating consequences of welfare. Leading black intellectuals and policy-makers (among others) grappling with the overwhelming rise in female-headed households also view welfare programs separated from jobs and real training as demoralizing and contributing to the further disintegration of the black family. Women on welfare repeatedly reaffirm their aspirations for decent jobs at decent wages; the vast majority would still rather work than go on welfare. If women's wages leave them and their children in or near poverty, why not fight to raise their wages? (This would certainly be more feasible than expanding welfare programs in the current political/deficit climate.)

This brings me to the first of two surprising omissions: "comparable worth." The contemporary movement by some feminists and trade unionists to raise the wage levels of "women's jobs" must figure prominently in any discussion of women's economic standing.

The second omission, male unemployment, cries out for serious attention and concern, not acquiescence. Again, blacks bear the highest rates: male unemployment of 25 percent and unemployment of female house-

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hold heads of 45 percent. We can all agree that in the short run expanded welfare-state programs could help minimize the suffering of growing numbers of women and children living together in poverty; but this ignores the social and psychological problems faced by women and children (particularly boys) living in families without men. As extraordinary as it may seem, Ehrenreich and Piven apparently welcome the long-term growth of state-supported welfare programs as a liberation from the oppressive, male-dominated nuclear family—what Ehrenreich has earlier dubbed the "private-sector welfare system."

In the long run it would be best to work for an economy capable of providing secure jobs and adequate incomes, still the bedrock for the preferred family form: stable male-and-female headed households.

JAN ROSENBERG
Brooklyn, New York □

BARBARA EHRENREICH Replies

1. Frances Piven and I do not propose expanded social welfare programs as an alternative to well-paying jobs. We go to some length to argue that a truly adequate "safety net" would empower women (and men) in their workplace struggles (a point well made in *The New Class War*, by Richard Cloward and Frances Piven).

2. It is true that poor women are diverse in race, class background, and so on. But for purposes of public policy, what's wrong with treating them as a "unified entity"? Surely, Rosenberg isn't thinking of different benefits for women of different races, marital backgrounds, marital prospects, or other features of their "distinct personal and class-cultural histories"?

3. The demoralizing effect of welfare is an issue I had thought we had handled rather well in our article. Once again: welfare is demoralizing because it is *designed* to be demoralizing, to discourage people from enrolling. Worse still, the benefits are barely sufficient for subsistence. Naturally, many women would prefer a well-paying job (especially if child care were available). But many others, especially women of color, have struggled for expanded benefits and more dignified treatment.

4. Comparable worth is important, but this was an article about (and originally entitled) women and the welfare state.

5. There is no evidence that "the social and psychological problems" of female-headed families have any source other than poverty. What these families need most desperately is not a man, but a man's wage.

6. We *do* think women should have other options than "the oppressive, male-dominated nuclear family." As it is, all too many women remain in oppressive, abusive, and even violent relationships because they can see no economic alternatives. A marriage that is held together only by the wife's fear of destitution is not worth saving.

7. Now to the ideological punch line, the "preferred family form." As feminists, we prefer to recognize and respect the diversity of American families. Public policy should also recognize this diversity, rather than holding up one type of family (generally the male-breadwinner, female-homemaker, plus kids model) as the norm, compared to which all others are "broken" or "pathological."

By the way, we *can* imagine "giving up on the goal of full employment for men," to fight instead for adequate social welfare programs for them. This fanciful notion used to be summarized as a "guaranteed annual income for all," and I list it—along with National Health Insurance—as one of the "old ideas" the Democrats seem to have forgotten. □

"Pershings over Europe?"

I

Editors:

Whether one says "No" to the Euromissiles with Bogdan Denitch or welcomes their deployment as a NATO victory with Dennis Wrong (in "Pershings over Europe?" in the Spring 1984 issue) should depend in the final analysis on one's reading of the nature and current state of the East-West antagonism.

I agree with Wrong that in proceeding to carry out its deployment decision, NATO has won a victory. But in what sense? In the same sense in which it was the victor in three elections in NATO nations that he mentions and in one he does not: the one that made Ronald Reagan our president. The elections, like the deployment, were good for the continuation of the cold war and the arms race, and hence for NATO as their symbolic institutionalization in the West. True, as Wrong points out, "the Reagan administration's loose words" and the "popular apprehensions aroused" by them put some life into "pacifist-neutralist movements." But you cannot play at war—even a cold or sham one—without scaring and arousing some of the people. It takes cold warriors to have a cold war, and Reagan has been about the most effective imaginable model for it in our time.

As I see the missile "victory," I cannot rejoice in it. If the Russians' purpose in deploying their SS-20 missiles was the "usable nuclear superiority" to bring about the "Finlandization" of Europe suggested by Wrong, they were just as misguided as is our side in its counterdeployment. Why did the "nearly 40 years" of Soviet "preponderance in both nuclear and conventional strength"—claimed to my mild surprise by Dennis Wrong—not result in Europe's "Finlandization" long

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ago? And why bother with the counterdeployment, since that preponderance "will not be eliminated" by the new missiles? To reaffirm NATO and "partially" restore the military balance of power, Wrong appears to be saying.

We should not really care too much about how the Soviets rationalized their SS-20s to themselves, nor how our side rationalizes its countermove. The critical fact is that we are both addicted to the arms race, and will always find reasons for our next move in the other side's last move. None of the rationalizations stand up very well to informed logical scrutiny (except perhaps to that of "experts on military matters," according to Dennis Wrong), but they are effective, or have been so far, in political reality. And in that reality, the cold war and the arms race have become indispensable props for the internal status quo, East and West.

The Euromissiles affair must thus be seen as an episode within a historic process now completing its fourth decade. It is by itself not a momentous, certainly not a conclusive, event. The opponents of their deployment tend to exaggerate the risks: with or without the missiles there are enough explosives around. In a war-bound world, however, they would enhance the threat of war. And they may increase the risk of accidents, which would be horrible but would hardly set off a war not in the making. Isn't it enough that they add to the awful waste of our physical, psychic, and moral resources, and keep us from more constructive pursuits?

The proponents delude themselves as to the benefits. A sophisticated advocacy will moderate its claims of added physical security—for instance, Wrong's "partial" restoration of the military balance—and stress political gains. In Wrong's view, not only NATO but democratic government itself had to be reaffirmed by the deployment of the fearsome, unemployable weapons for their supposed political effect.

This is a sad perspective for "Americans of left-liberal values"! Buy it, or resign yourselves to America "pursuing a more aggressive unilateral policy of resisting the Soviet Union. . . ." For democracy to be preserved, nationally and internationally, the highest priority to the good fight against the "evil empire"!

This "fight" should indeed be given precedence over the missiles—as a subject of scrutiny in all its aspects, in the columns of *Dissent*. What is the fight about, not from the perspective of the 1940s and '50s, but of (the real) 1984? Not as a test of the merits of rival systems, but as a contest between power blocs. What about it is compatible with "left-liberal values," and where does that leave the missiles and the arms race?

About one thing we should have no illusions. While it can't be denied that ending the cold war would entail social and political upheavals East and West that may put democracy at risk where it exists, democracy's prospects would be at least equally uncertain if cold war and arms race were to continue for another major round or two of perverse shadowboxing.

MARK PRICEMAN
Larchmont, N.Y.

II

Editors:

Dennis Wrong's comment on the deployment of the Euromissiles ("Pershings Over Europe?") in the Spring 1984 *Dissent* could not be more wrongheaded. While his basic point—"Yes" to the Pershings—is outrageous enough, even more incredible is his way of framing the discussion. One expects more from an editor of *Dissent*. On the question of the strategic and political value of the missiles, Wrong provides no argument in support of his "Yes" contention. He would do well to carefully consider the remarks by Bogdan Denitch, who stated the *strategic* liabilities of the Euromissiles.

On the question of the geopolitical implications of the new European arms race, Wrong simply reiterates the received wisdom of the *Economist*, that the new NATO deployments are a (necessary) response to the Soviet attempt "to separate Europe from America and frighten it into acquiescence in future crises and conflicts."

What exactly this means is then left to our imagination, and Wrong provides no analysis of the causes and strategies of the superpower rivalry of which the latest arms race is a part. This is particularly troubling. While it could once be said that the American left was "soft on communism" (although this language in itself is another story altogether), I fear that it has become fashionable of late to simply accept the Pentagon's definition of reality. There is a very serious theoretical and practical debate taking place about the connection of the arms race with American geopolitical and economic interests in the Third World, and the strategic importance of the "European theater" in this regard. Verso's *Exterminism and Cold War* is an interesting collection of essays on these problems, which attempts not to deny or paper over the malign actions and intentions of the Soviet Union in parts of the world, and to explain the new cold war. There are many difficult questions to be asked, and no easy answers, but it would seem from Wrong's comment that he prefers simply to repeat the prognoses of the current cold-war consensus.

Most disturbing, considering Wrong's reputation as an astute and open-minded social theorist, is his glorying in NATO's "victory in proceeding smoothly to carry out its decision in face of intense domestic opposition in West Germany and Britain, encouraged and often promoted by the Soviet Union." Surprising here is not so much his analysis of the European peace movement, which sounds remarkably like the analysis of the CIA, as his satisfaction that NATO (which is *not* a democratically elected government but an alliance system with its own complicated military and bureaucratic institutional apparatus) has prevailed over the most massive and organized popular movement to confront European states in the postwar era. Wrong asks us to believe that the suspension of the NATO decision (the deployments) "would have cast a shadow on democratic government itself." How? Popular demonstrations, marches, plebiscites—even civil disobedience—might force Kohl and Thatcher to alter their

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policies, revealing "extraordinary political weakness and instability." How frightening a scenario!

Wrong, a learned student of contemporary democratic theory, apparently believes that a bureaucratic decision, taken by the leaders of West European NATO governments in an alliance dominated by the United States—a decision vocally and actively opposed by a mass movement representing the most vigorous popular participation to emerge in recent years—is the supreme expression of democracy.

Wrong's brief reiteration of cold-war platitudes is disturbing, but it hardly distinguishes him from many others on the "democratic left." What is distinctive is the disdain he expresses for democracy. The mass, public opposition to government policy, indeed the active and intense expression of this opposition, is the essence of democracy. It is the exercise of those political rights that distinguishes democratic states from authoritarian ones. Indeed, civil disobedience is a democratic practice, designed to make a government responsive when all else fails, and premised upon the assumption of the ultimate responsibility of government officials. The politics of opposition, particularly in regard to a global issue such as nuclear arms, must of necessity be confrontational. In practicing such a politics, activists and ordinary citizens must make difficult, consequential choices.

To break the law, and to accept the consequences, is the most difficult decision. It is not taken lightly or belligerently, for, unlike the battle of ideas, in real battle the state always wins. Thus while "instability" is inherent in the politics of the peace movement, the "threats to civil liberties and public order," which Wrong seems to attribute to the peace movement, represent in fact the probability of the exercise of the state's repressive powers against political protest. That the politics of democratic states should come to this is neither pleasant nor desirable. But the frustration of the peace movement, and its reliance upon a strategy of "intense opposition," is simply a testament to the failure of NATO governments to respond to more normal forms of opposition, and to repeal a dangerous and fateful decision. To quote a figure from America's own democratic heritage—"if this be treason, then make the most of it!"

Jeffrey C. Isaac
Fordham University
New York City

Dennis Wrong Replies

Jeffrey Isaac and Mark Priceman are annoyed because I did not directly argue the case for the NATO missiles but chose instead to confine myself to noting that deployment was a *fait accompli* and reflected an electoral consensus. The editors of *Dissent*, correctly assuming that I approved of the NATO decision, had asked me to write a comment no longer than four pages (I took five) to be printed with Bogdan Denitch's equally brief negative statement. Writing last January, I saw little point in once more going over ground that had been debated countless times here and in Europe since at least 1981, a debate certainly familiar to *Dissent* readers. (Mr. Isaac, however, will not be denied the chance to run through the standard list of ritual epithets about "cold-war platitudes," "Pentagon definitions of reality," and the like.)

Denitch and I did not see each other's contributions before publication. I expected that he would make a military-strategic argument and it would have been easy enough to make a counterargument. But neither of us is a strategic expert, and there are presumptive experts on both sides who have been heard from at length. So I decided, wisely or not, to limit myself to the politics of the issue at the time of writing when the protest demonstrations were petering out and the stationing of the missiles was proceeding peacefully. Events have moved much further in this direction in the succeeding six months: the protests have continued to fade away, both the German SPD and British Labour have toned down and partially backed off from their stands last year, and the Greens have split over, among other things, the influence of Communists in their ranks. If my views are now, as Mr. Isaac claims, "fashionable" on the "democratic left," I can only respond with a gracious bow. I hope he is right.

Mr. Isaac's impassioned defense of mass demonstrations and civil disobedience is utterly beside the point, since I never questioned anyone's right to engage in such activities. Nor did I express "disdain" for them; I merely remarked that they often antagonized rather than converted nonparticipants. The relevant issue was whether it necessarily was democratic to demand that governments reject policies they had strongly advocated in successful election campaigns just a few months earlier in response to continuing single-issue demonstrations and protests against those policies. The protest movements, it is worth noting, were not independent of the elections and waned after the vote was in, months before the missiles were deployed. Protest marches and "demos" are certainly legitimate expressions of democracy, but so are free elections and the debates and decisions of elected parliaments. Of course, NATO is not an elected body, but its decisions and membership in it are subject to parliamentary approval in the nations belonging to the alliance.

As for civil disobedience, the more violent forms of it were overwhelmingly rejected by the German peace movement according to Richard Löwenthal, a frequent and long-time contributor to *Dissent*. His recent "Letter from Berlin" in *Partisan Review* (No. 2, 1984) provides an informed and wise account of the missiles issue in Germany. I did *not*, as Mr. Isaac suggests, even "seem to attribute to the peace movement . . . threats to civil liberties and public order," for I have no first-hand knowledge of the German (or British) movement. I did no more than report that many observers on the scene had erroneously predicted that such threats would materialize, some of them supporters of the movement who used this as a second-line argument against the

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missiles. Mr. Isaac's peroration about breaking the law suggests that he wishes they had proved to be right. What he refuses to acknowledge is that popular majorities in the NATO countries don't share his rejection of the NATO decision or of NATO itself. (Unlike Willy Brandt, neither Mr. Isaac nor Mr. Priceman distinguishes between them, magisterially rejecting both.) This is the crucial fact, not any "exercise of the repressive powers of the state against political protest," for there was no such exercise.

The present situation in Holland, incidentally, is something else. A Dutch government pledged to carry out the NATO decision also won an election, but the verdict was not clear-cut and the government coalition itself is split on deployment. Under such circumstances, it seems to me that a decision to postpone deployment is a matter of judgment on which democratic principle has little direct bearing. I don't pretend to be "a learned student of contemporary democratic theory," but I do lay claim to some understanding of the grubby realities of democracy in practice.

Mr. Isaac's remarks about the alleged similarity of my views to those of the Pentagon and the CIA are sheer demagoguery unworthy of someone associated with a reputable university. The list of European social democrats—some in office, some in opposition—who supported the NATO decision long before deployment began includes Schmidt, Mitterrand, Mauroy, Craxi, Soares, Owen, Jenkins, Healy, Hattersly, and many others. Does Mr. Isaac think that they all take their cues from the Pentagon or the CIA? Or that (like me) they ought to be read out of the ranks of the "democratic left" because they happen to agree on a foreign policy issue with Kohl, Thatcher, and Reagan? Mr. Isaac's remark that "in real battle the state always wins" suggests that he has a penchant for posturing on behalf of noble lost causes. Politics, especially perhaps left-liberal politics, is too important to be left to such romantically self-indulgent sectarianism.

Mr. Priceman seems to think that the cold war was acceptable back in the 1940s and 1950s, but now that the Soviet Union is much stronger vis-à-vis the United States it has become "a contest between rival power blocs." Surely it was always that, which in no way precludes a choice of the West as infinitely preferable on the scale of liberal and democratic values. I have always thought that military deterrence of the Soviet Union through arrangements for collective security (that is, the "cold war" and NATO) was justifiable and necessary, today as much as over a quarter of a century ago, although I have never thought that everything else ought to be sacrificed to this goal if that's what Mr. Priceman means to suggest by his reference to "the highest priority."

Mr. Priceman thinks I present "a sad perspective." But I'm less pessimistic than he is. He thinks that continuation of the cold war threatens democracy but that "ending the cold war would entail social and political upheavals East and West that may put democracy at risk where it exists"—which means in the West. I see no convincing evidence in support of either eventuality. Why should "another round or two" of rearmament be a greater threat than in the past, *if*—and the qualification is essential—we avoid future misadventures like the Vietnam War? President Reagan is not my favorite president, but he was fairly elected and not solely, nor even primarily, because he was a "cold warrior." The NATO missile decision was made when Carter was president and was not an issue in the 1980 election, in contrast to the European elections of 1983. I should dearly love to see a negotiated disarmament agreement with the Russians, but I am not persuaded that the absence of one is all the fault of Ronald Reagan nor that democracy is imperiled if we have to wait another generation or so.

Mr. Priceman seems to hope (or fear?) that near-revolutions would break out in the West if arms spending and the cold war ended as "indispensable props for the internal status quo." The unpopular war in Vietnam provoked much social turmoil in the United States, but the Nixon-Ford-Carter years of détente were hardly marked by tumultuous social change. Nor has this been evident in other Western democracies, or in Japan, all countries that devote much lower proportions of their resources to military purposes.

Mr. Priceman overestimates the impact of the cold war on Western societies, probably because, like most liberal Americans, he refuses to see the autonomous reality of international relations and foreign policies clearly enough to cope with them. He thinks the whole realm is an epiphenomenon of domestic politics and wishes it would go away. Yet the procapitalist Reagan and the socialist Mitterrand clearly see eye-to-eye on many issues of East-West relations, including Euromissile deployment. The subject is so distasteful to Mr. Priceman that he even objects to any inquiry into the reasons why the Soviet Union installed the SS–20s and increased its arms buildup during détente. At least he mentions these events, whereas Mr. Isaac finds them unworthy of the slightest notice. □

Stay Our Course!

Editors:

I'm a fugitive from the '60s, a descendant of shopkeepers and socialists, who now vacillates in ideology between economic democracy and neoliberalism.

By now I've read every major publication on the nonsectarian left. Recently I picked up yours and found that it fit my mood of nostalgia for the rightness of the old cause and honesty about the historical failure of socialism. Only time will tell if you will bring me back to the social democratic fold or precipitate my next subscription—to the *Washington Monthly.*

CARL BLUMENTHAL
Jersey City, N.J. □

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